

**Remembering a
deathly obsession**
Pages
12-13



**Collectors
show off tubes**
Page 15



**Hubei cuisine
gets new name**
Page 17

Ticket rush begins



As Spring Festival nears, the country's railways are preparing to service 188 million passengers, 4.7 million per day, who will head home for the holidays. At Beijing West Railway Station, a special ticket office opened for the city's migrant workers.

"A train ticket during the annual holiday rush is (still) one of the most valuable commodities," a spokesman for the Ministry of Railways said.

Photo by CFP

See more of ticket story on Page 2.

Page 3

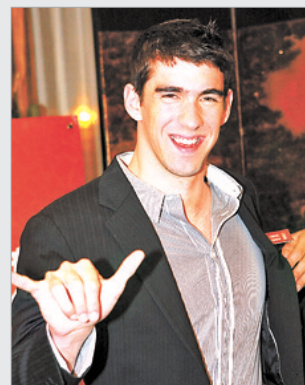
**Poyang poachers
kill swans
by the hundreds**

Page 4

**Shocking brutality
turns attention to
domestic abuse**

Page 5

**Police find new
flood of fake yuan
from Taiwan**



Page 8

**Swimming
champ back to
endorse Mazda**

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Spring Festival passengers suspicious about ticket sales

By Zhang Dongya

A video posted on the Internet showed an employee in the ticketing window at Beijing Railway Station refusing to sell tickets to passengers during work hours, and instead stockpiling the tickets for unclear reasons.

Though the station spokesman said Monday that passengers misunderstood why the employee was hoarding tickets, his explanation has failed to convince the public.

As Spring Festival draws near, passenger transport is a big challenge for the national rail system. The railways are trying new methods to handle this year's rush, and traffic is expected to be smoother than in years past.

The Ministry of Railways said at a press conference last Saturday this year's rush will last 40 days, from January 11 to February 29.

This year will have some 2.32 billion passengers during the travel peak period, 8 percent more than the same period last year. The Ministry estimated 188 million people would travel by rail, an average of 4.7 million daily.

Wang Yongping, spokesman with the Ministry of Railways, said at the conference that the ministry took all possible measures to optimize rail transport.

This year, the ministry will run 1,413 regular round-trips and 319 temporary trains, 142 and 8 more than last year, respectively. Some sleeper train compartments would be restructured as seats to allow more passengers. They said they would work with universities to ensure student tickets, as well as increase the number of ticket booths and set up special booths for migrants and students.

Scalpers are an annual problem that is hard to dispel. Police said they would clamp down on ticket scalping and counterfeiting, and ticket sellers were asked not to sell to scalpers.

However, spokesman Wang said "a train ticket during the annual holiday rush is one of the most valuable commodities," and that is not likely to change this year.

Migrant workers from around the country compiled a "guide to purchasing train tickets during



A train ticket during the Festival rush is still the most valuable commodity. CFP Photo

Spring Festival" and posted it on the Internet, offering some tricks for people trying to rush home for the holidays. Critics said officials should feel "ashamed and guilty" that such a guide needs to be made.

Suggestions like stamping tickets with real names to avoid cheats and scalpers remain theoretical arguments. Officials said it would not work with the traf-

fic, though many suspect it is because the officials are protecting hidden interests.

The Ministry of Railways promised to ease the bottleneck by 2012, when intensive investment will extend total track mileage to 110,000 kilometers, including 13,000 kilometers of passenger lines on which trains could run between 200 to 350 kilometers per hour, Xinhua reported.

Carnival rides come to Olympic area



A giant Carnival Amusement Park is scheduled for construction in the Olympic central area, Beijing Youth Daily reported Thursday. Construction has already started, and it is expected to open to the public during Spring Festival. Twenty of the park's amusement rides have already been set up. (By Zhang Dongya) Photo by Wei Tong

Civil Aviation sets base price for air tickets

By Jin Zhu

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) will set a base price for seats on 699 flights. Airlines have been ordered not to sell tickets below these prices, the China Air Transport Association (CATA) said on Monday.

Names of airlines that offer passengers tickets below the CAAC base prices will be announced every 15 days. These airlines will be punished, possibly by having their routes canceled, the association said.

"The measure prevents airlines from competing with each other by selling tickets below cost. It is

part of the CAAC's 10 measures to deal with the current global financial crisis," Li Aiqing, a researcher with CATA, said.

According to CAAC statistics, as airlines have continued to offer big discounts to attract customers the past few months, domestic airlines lost as many as 7 billion yuan in the first 11 months of 2008.

Last week, as the price war continued, China Eastern Airlines offered a big discount on flights from Chengdu to Shanghai, which prompted counterattacks from Air China, Shanghai Airlines and Sichuan Airlines who called on ticket-

ing agents to stop selling tickets for China Eastern.

"The current bad air travel market is making price wars fiercer than ever. We need a timely and effective way to regulate market prices," Wei Zhenzhong, secretary-general of the association, said.

Wei said it will be impossible for passengers to get more discounts of 70 to 80 percent, which were common over the last months, after regulations take effect.

However, airlines oppose the base price. "It is reasonable for airlines to promote discounts on ticket prices. The government should not

regulate the market prices by using administrative measures," Zhang Lei, spokesman for Spring Airlines, said.

He said to ensure the interests of consumers, promotional tickets with big discounts should be permitted.

Customers also worry about the base price. "At present, the price for air travel is cheaper than train and saves time. However, I am not sure whether the future base price will be the lowest possible," said Yang Jie, who just bought a ticket from Beijing to Urumqi to spend Spring Festival with her family.

Antibiotics abuse claims 80,000 lives a year

By Han Manman

Misuse of antibiotics kills 80,000 people in the country each year due to adverse reactions. It also leads to extra medical spending of 80 billion yuan across the country, *China Youth Daily* reported earlier this week.

The estimate was reached after medical experts investigated the deaths of 200,000 people in 2005, concluding 40 percent of the fatalities were due to the abuse of antibiotics, the report said.

In 2007, antibiotics were prescribed to about 74 percent of hospital patients and about 21 percent of outpatients. Those figures are far higher than in many other countries, the Ministry of Health said.

Penicillin, one of the first and most widely used antibiotics, and other antibiotics successfully treated many bacterial infections of the last century. It was predicted that the time had arrived for humanity to conquer bacteria. But abuse of antibiotics is making bacteria increasingly drug-resistant.

"It takes about 10 years to develop a new antibiotic and bacterial resistance emerges within two years. There may come a time when there are no effective antibiotics left," Liu Yong, a director of the Health Ministry, said.

The 2007 World Health Report had said drug resistance was a serious problem that jeopardized human safety.

Some gynecological antibiotics that are prohibited or strictly controlled in foreign countries due to poor safety and adverse reactions are still widely used in China, said Wu Yongpei, an expert with the committee of rational use of medicine under the Health Ministry.

"Some patients and even doctors consider antibiotics a panacea and use them often to treat minor illnesses. Many doctors even do not know the basic rules for using such medicines," Wu said.

Wu said the main reason for the excessive usage is that hospitals earn more money because of the relatively high prices of antibiotics. The drugs accounted for almost 26 percent of drug sales at 124 hospitals in 2004, according to a national survey. The ratio was about 20 percent in recent years, Wu said.

"Hospitals suffer significant economic losses if their antibiotics are not sold before their expiry dates," said Wang Aixia, director of the infectious disease department of Peking Union Medical College Hospital.

Health authorities will train 45,000 doctors at public hospitals through February 2010 "to ensure safe, effective and economical use of antibiotics," the ministry said.

Swans a victim of poachers

By Annie Wei

Lake Poyang in northern Jiangxi Province has long been a stopover for migratory birds making their trip south during the cold winter months.

This year, the lake became a tomb for dozens of flocks of swans. As many as two to three hundred swans perish in the lake every day, the *Jiangnan Metro Post*, a local newspaper, reported this week.

Huang Xianyin, 34, a former farmer and volunteer migrant bird protectionist, contacted the newspaper earlier this month to report the mass deaths. The swan is a nationally protected wild species which he said was being poisoned or caught in steel nets by poachers who planned to sell them to restaurants.

The newspaper dispatched a reporter on January 4 to accompany Huang to Lianyu village in Xinjian county. Within one hour of circling the lake they found 40 dead swans and numerous poisoned wild ducks. Huang said every day from lunchtime to 3 pm, the swan hunters placed poison around the lake and came to collect the dead birds between 4 and 5 am the

next day.

In neighboring Changyi village they found a 5-meter-high steel net. Huang said the birds' wings stuck in the net when they get into it. Local fishermen in the Shangchahu area told the *Metro Post* reporter there were as many as 100 nets arranged along a 10-kilometer stretch of the lake.

Starting in October, poachers would poison the water or erect their nets at 4 pm, then return the next morning to collect their prey. Some poachers fired shotgun shells into the flocks killing a dozen swans with each shot, the report said.

However, the *Post* reporter said there were no obvious swan vendors in the city. All trade in swans was conducted underground, Huang said.

"As Chinese New Year's approaches, the price of swan is going up," Huang said. Poached swans sell for 800 yuan a head to middle and high-end hotels. Swans exported to other provinces may fetch several thousand yuan. To avoid being caught, poachers will not sell swans to unfamiliar buyers.

After their two-day trip to



Huang Xianyin finding many dead swans along Lake Poyang.

Photo by Jiangxi Metro Post

Lake Poyang, Huang was repeatedly threatened. Vandals would attack his house in the middle of the night, he said. His 15-year-old son who studied at a school in Xinjian county was threatened by teenagers at the school gate because, "(he) took someone to the lake in the afternoon," the newspaper reported.

The bullying has been an on and off occurrence since he became a bird protection volunteer at the end of 2004, Huang said.

It is hard to stop the swan poach-

ers, Li, manager of wild animal protection station in Nanchang, said.

"Lake Poyang is very big and we have only 10 workers with poor equipment. Although we often visit the counties and villages to distribute bird protection information, the results are not promising," Li said.

Huang carries the dead swans to town to deliver to related authorities. "Many local government authorities all show concern about the swan's death, but they work as quickly as machines that aren't even plugged in," Huang said.

Xiamen PX Project may move to Zhangzhou

By Zhang Dongya

The Xiamen PX Project, a large-scale chemical project in Xiamen, Fujian Province, may relocate to neighboring Zhangzhou after a halt that began in 2007.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection approved the PX project in Zhangzhou at a conference called by Minister Zhou Shengxian last Friday, according to the ministry's Web site. The "PX" stands for paraxylene, a raw material used in chemical production.

Tenglong Aromatic PX in Zhangzhou would have a total investment of 18.7 billion yuan, the ministry said on its Web site Monday.

It was considered a crucial signal to launch the giant chemical manufacturing project, which was expected to draw investment of 10.8 billion yuan and expand the GDP of Xiamen by an estimated 80 million yuan.

According to the report on the ministry's Web, the project is expected to process paraxylene with an annual capacity of 800,000 tons. Paraxylene, used as a solvent in printing, rubber and leather industries, is hazardous to humans who can come into contact with the chemical through soil or groundwater.

The project, initiated in 2006, has encountered overwhelming protests from both residents and academics. Some 95 percent of people who voted online opposed the project in 2007, and Xiamen residents marched against the PX Project. Residents feared pollution and the introduction of toxins to the city. Under pressure, the Xiamen municipal government halted the project in May 2007.

According to a report by the Shanghai-based *China Business News* on Tuesday, the Ministry of Environmental Protection has reassessed the environmental impact of the project since last November.

It is said the project was relocated to Zhangzhou because the local department of environment protection was prepared to assure low-toxin products and a non-polluting producing process.

The project is expected to be a huge boost for the local economy, but residents in Zhangzhou expressed similar concerns on zzfsh.cn, a well-known community Web site in the city.

So far, the project still has not been made public by the local government in Zhangzhou. Critics said the governor should learn a lesson from Xiamen Project and make it public sooner so to gather public opinions.

Newly-wed couple prefers 10 rickshaws to Audis



A couple in Chongqing made the cover of all papers by hiring 10 rickshaws for their wedding ceremony. Zhou Gang, 28, the groom, said he wanted to have a special wedding for his 25-year-old bride Huang Linfeng. Renting a vehicle would cost 2,000 yuan but it was 400 yuan total for 10 rickshaws, Zhou said. The wedding trip ran along the commercial areas. Passengers gave them their wishes and supported Zhou's environmentally-friendly and economic wedding.

(By Annie Wei)

'Prostitute training' actually a clerical error

By Zhang Dongya

The Disease Control and Prevention Center in Yizhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, said the rumors that "the Center trains prostitutes" were the result of a clerical error, Xinhua reported Wednesday.

Last December, a notice released by the Center was posted on the Internet. According to the notice, an informational meeting would be held for female workers in entertainment venues to provide information on reproductive health, venereal disease and AIDS prevention. It also included how to guess a client's economic class, how

to attract clients, haggle a price and various sexual techniques.

The notice, which bore the official stamp of the Center at the end, was the subject of widespread speculation on whether the organization was formally training prostitutes.

Liao Dongming, deputy director of the Yizhou Municipal Health Bureau, also director of the Center, said last week the notice came from a Global Fund Round 6 AIDS Program in Guangxi. The international program aims to mobilize and support social and non-governmental organizations in scaling up the country's AIDS program.

The Center decided to hold a communication meeting to share related experience in Nanning, Guangxi, as part of the program last October.

The notice was written by a physician surnamed Lu.

Lu said the item "how to guess a client's economic class" was present to teach sex workers to judge whether the client may be involved in high-risk sexual behavior. It focused on recognizing signs in dress and manner.

The other items, "how to attract clients, haggle a price and various sexual techniques," were present to teach sex workers how to persuade

their clients to use condoms.

Lu said he had no idea why he expressed these items in that language, and could not remember why he failed to delete the items after the deputy director of the Center Wei Jinguang asked him to.

Wei said the original purpose was to spread information about AIDS prevention to female sex workers, though he admitted the wording was inappropriate.

Wei said AIDS prevention remains a serious challenge, and one fraught with embarrassing moments and misunderstanding of the material. Old ideas remain the big obstacle, he said.



Gao remains in critical condition.
Photo by Ma Qibing

Suffering in silence

By Venus Lee

Women are the main victims of domestic abuse: especially rural women who seldom take legal action to stop the violence. Most only escape to their parents' homes when they cannot take it any longer.

Last Wednesday must have been the darkest and most miserable day for Gao Qingzhi, 36, a woman in Luping village, Anhui Province.

Her anus, vagina, urinary bladder and rectum were penetrated with a reinforced steel bar, her right eyeball was ruptured and her limbs were broken. The damage was caused entirely by her husband Bao Zhaonian, 42, a migrant worker.

A sudden nightmare

Gao was kidnapped by four men while sending her 7-year-old daughter to school in the morning. Local police found her several hours later lying unconscious in a growing pool of blood: the steel beam still inside her.

Zhao Tao, a doctor in Anhui Provincial Hospital,

said the emergency surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, urology and gynecology and obstetrics had to work together in an eight-hour surgery to save her life. The doctor removed her crushed right eyeball and patched her bleeding organs. But the orthopedic procedure had to be postponed due to her weakened state.

"(She) is still not out of danger. Treatment may require nearly half a year," Zhao said.

"He dragged me into the house, and locked the door. Then he took a steel bar to beat my arms and legs a dozen times. I cried for help but no one heard me. Then he tore off my pants and used the bar to pierce my genitals," Gao said after she

regained consciousness.

Years of mistreatment

This was not the only time Gao was abused by her husband. Kicks and blows were common occurrence since they married in 2006.

According to her brother, this was the second marriage for both of them. The couple fell in love at first sight when they were introduced three years ago. Gao soon married him despite her family's protest.

She was sent to the hospital two months later to receive eight stitches in her head after she was beaten on Lunar New Year's Eve 2007. The treatment came under a fake name her husband fabricated so she had no proof of abuse when she sued for divorce.

Gao experienced countless beating. Her hand was fractured and black and blue bruises covered her face and body in place of make-up. Once, her husband prevented her from leaving the house for half a year after being badly beaten. He cut the phone lines so she could not call for help.

In order to avoid his endless abuse, Gao moved to her parent's home in August 2008.

"My sister wants a divorce, but Bao threatens her frequently. He said if she insists on divorce, he will kill her, his stepdaughter and even her relatives," her brother said. "This was all done because she asked again to divorce."



Combating domestic abuse remains a tough problem.

Too sahmeful to share

Though she has been abused for years, she kept it a secret.

Neither the local Women's Federation, the police nor the village committee have ever received her appeal for assistance. "The local villagers are all afraid of him, so it is no use to ask for help. No one wants to offend him," Gao said.

According to her brother, Gao is an introvert. She is afraid of others' gossiping about how this is her second marriage. Remarriage is looked down upon in many rural areas. "I knew her husband was brutal, but I never knew he was

so dehumanizing to her. But she never talks about this with our relatives," her brother said.

Gao is not the only rural woman to silently suffer domestic abuse. According to a survey conducted in 2007 by the Family Law and Women Study Center of Southwest University of Political Science and Law, 61 percent of rural women are unwilling to make their abuse open to the public and fewer than 30 percent are willing to ask help from the village committee, the police or other organizations.

"Compared with urban women who have regular work and stable

income, undereducated rural women are passive. Especially those women who give in and tolerate abuse: it only inflates the arrogance of the abuser," Chen Wei, the director of the center, said.

effort urgently needed

Understanding of domestic abuse is weak in rural areas. People consider abuse a private domestic matter and rarely seek public assistance. The idea of domestic shame remains deeply rooted.

"Most women are reluctant to tell this kind of thing to others. It is difficult for related organizations to aid victims. In order to resolve such problems, the continuing education of rural people is indispensable and urgent," Chen said.

The inferior family status is another main reason for domestic abuse against women. Most rural women are economically dependent on their husbands, so they are forced into a subordinate position in the family. The idea that men are superior to women is prevalent in rural China.

"The concept stems from gender inequalities. But if rural women have regular work and indepen-

dent income, their inferior condition may change. Government must create more job opportunities for them in the local area. That is a good way to enhance their status in the family," Chen said.

The frequency of domestic abuse in rural areas also reflects shortcomings in the legal system. The private nature of the abuse shuts out law enforcement from preventing it.

"Current laws attach more importance to the aftermath of a violent episode, but do nothing to prevent and curb continuous violent behavior," Shi Jimin, a lawyer at the Yancheng law office, said.

The national legal code still lacks laws to deal with domestic abuse. Presently some 25 provinces have added domestic abuse regulations to their own legal codes.

Seven government departments, including those connected to public security, justice, civil affairs, health and law, as well as the All-China Women's Federation, issued a legal guidebook on the prevention and ending of domestic violence last year. However, without national laws and courts to hear cases of abuse,

the guide is just paper.

Psychological counseling is also limited in rural areas. Many village committees, rural women's associations and many other NGOs only function as legal consulting rooms. "If the psychological intervention is accessible to both abusers and victims, it may help to ease households in which abuse is a frequent problem," Liu Yuxiang, a sociologist in Hengyang Normal University, said.



Rural women rarely admit to abuse.
Photos by CFP

Watch out for fake yuan bills

(BBC) – China's central bank has issued a warning about fake banknotes ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday.

The bank said fake 100-yuan bills bearing the "HD90" serial number have been reported in 10 provinces. They have also been found in Hong Kong.

A People's Bank of China statement said low-quality counterfeit detectors did not always manage to spot the fakes.

But it said the telltale signs could be spotted

with the naked eye, and urged people to be vigilant.

"Though most counterfeit 100-yuan notes are not too hard to make out, people should be careful as cash transactions during the Spring Festival are high," the central bank statement said.

"The fake notes start with 'HD90' and are aimed at cheating detectors, and some poor-quality detectors are easy to cheat," Ye Yingnan, of the bank, was quoted by the *Beijing News* as saying.

But Ye said there was no need for panic. "Those with experience are bound to tell the difference."

The *South China Morning Post*, an English-language newspaper in Hong Kong, said police had seized more fake 100-yuan bills in the city recently, also with the HD prefix.

The forged notes, it reported, were believed to have been produced by a fraud syndicate in Taiwan, which was busted in October with the seizure of 100 million yuan in fake notes.

Official

Currency probe result out soon

The People's Bank of China said on Tuesday results of investigations into fake 100-yuan bills would be released soon.

"We are monitoring the situation closely," Xu Li, the central bank's information officer, said, adding that results of the probe will soon be released.

The Shanghai headquarters

of the central bank said on Tuesday it would also launch measures to crack down on the circulation of fake notes, by strengthening cooperation between public security and related industrial and commercial departments.

Communication between commercial banks and counter-

feit-note detector manufacturers will also be enhanced to boost anti-counterfeit measures at bank counters, it said in a statement.

By the end of last October, Shanghai banks had upgraded all their counterfeit-note detectors, it said.

(By Huang Daohen)

Update

Web sites still offering fake notes

Mainland Web sites offering high-quality fake banknotes were still operating Wednesday despite regulators promising a crackdown before the Lunar New Year.

Several online sellers of the fake bills in Guangdong Province claim the notes' security threads and watermarks can cheat detectors, and are ideal for shopping.

The vendors said potential buyers could view the forged notes before purchasing, and many promised a full refund if clients could not

offload their stocks.

Many said they had stopped supplying fake notes with serial numbers starting with either "HD" or "HB" because the public had been alerted to counterfeits with those numbers.

A fake banknote distributor in Shenzhen said on his Web site that he only supplied "authentic Taiwan-made forged notes made with foreign technology."

The vendor claimed to offer the latest forged bills and coins in vari-

ous denominations, with "genuine color, touch and major anti-counterfeiting characteristics."

But suppliers said the guarantee of quality did not extend to depositing the money in bank accounts because tellers had learned how to spot hi-tech fakes.

"Surely we wouldn't sell fake banknotes to you if we could deposit them in bank accounts ourselves," one unapologetic Guangzhou counterfeit-money wholesaler said.

(By Huang Daohen)



Fake "HD90" banknotes were found across the country. IC Photo

Expert View

Holders should not pay for fake money

Bank authorities have issued statements to assure the public there was no possibility of fake money getting through banks' scanners. The statements, however, sound too feeble to assuage the public's fear.

The assurance does not seem convincing enough because there had been reports of customers getting fake money from ATMs. The latest case occurred only

a few days ago, when a man surnamed Qian, withdrew 1,000 yuan from an ATM at a bank in Mianyang, Sichuan Province, but later found nine of the 10 100-yuan notes to be counterfeit.

As he had not asked for an invoice from the automatic teller machine, the man could not prove the source of the money and had to bear the loss.

State regulations say that fake money, when found, should be confiscated. In other words, the loss is borne by whoever holds it. The regulation is based on the theory that the act of keeping a counterfeit banknote is illegal. In reality, however, most holders of fake money obtain them without knowing. The fact leaves the regulation questionable.

Although a person who accidentally receives a fake note is blamed for not being careful enough to detect it, he or she should not be held 100-percent liable for the mistake.

Besides the recognition of the phony notes, the problem also involves their making and trafficking, and they have become more and more difficult to detect

thanks to the advancement of forging techniques. These faults should not be blamed on common people who involuntarily become holders of fake money.

Instead, it is the State's responsibility to stop and crack down on the making and trafficking of fake money.

— Liu Shinan, commentator for China Daily

Health fears grow as fake drugs flood into Britain

(The Observer) – Counterfeiting gangs based in China are producing sophisticated copies of the world's best-selling pharmaceuticals. In 2008, an estimated 8 million of these potentially deadly pills found their way to patients of Britain's National Health Service (NHS). The health of millions is at risk.

The medicines were made in China, labeled in French and then shipped to Singapore. They ended up in Liverpool and from there were sold straight into the heart of the NHS. As the criminal investigation continues into how a fake consignment of Zyprexa, an anti-psychotic treatment prescribed for schizophrenia, infiltrated Brit-

ain's healthcare system last year, evidence is mounting that sophisticated counterfeiting syndicates are increasingly targeting the UK's network of high-street chemists, hospitals and general practitioner surgeries.

Figures collated for the first time reveal that British border officials seized more than half a million counterfeit pills destined for the NHS and main street chemists last year, an amount equal to the quantity of counterfeit drugs found in the whole of Europe in 2005. So vast is the scale of the threat from fake medicines that public confidence in the NHS could be "completely undermined," legal experts said.

China to investigate alleged fake pills

By Jin Zhu

The Chinese government has promised to investigate how the counterfeit pills were sold to Britain and ended up being used by the National Health Service (NHS), the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) said Wednesday.

"We will conduct relevant investigations and will definitely punish companies or individuals who manufacture fake pharmaceuticals for export," Yan Jiangying, an SFDA spokeswoman, said.

According to the UK Statistics Authority, Britain is the easiest market among European coun-

tries for fake drugs to infiltrate.

British authorities admitted that since the fake drugs had been resold and repackaged several times before they flooded into Britain, the quantity of fake medicines or their present health impact were impossible to calculate.

"Currently, most fake drugs are sold to Britain via the Internet. Besides that, public health institutions in Britain often choose cheaper medicines," said Wang Jinxia, secretary-general of the China Association of Pharmaceutical Commerce.

The SFDA spokeswoman reiterated China's determination to

crack down on the importing or exporting of fake medicines. "If we find any clues of illegal medicine production for export, we will track them down," Yan said.

According to Chinese law, medicine exporters need to acquire government-issued certificates. Exported pills should be accompanied by sales permission papers in accordance with conditions given by the World Health Organization.

The SFDA also reminded foreign pharmaceutical traders to work with certified Chinese partners to ensure they get qualified and safe medicines.

Disney proposes first mainland park

By Huang Daohen

Walt Disney said Monday it signed a project proposal with the Shanghai municipal government to build the first mainland Disney theme park.

The plan is still in the proposal stage, Leslie Goodman, spokeswoman with the family entertainment giant said in an emailed statement.

"No deal has been agreed to, no project has been approved," she said.

"As part of this lengthy process, we worked on a joint application report with the Shanghai government which will be submitted to the central government for review," Goodman said. But she declined to say whether the application had been completed or when it would be submitted.

Disney has been in talks with the government for a decade about building the theme park in Shanghai. Rumors about the project emerged in 2002, and since then negotiations reportedly went through multiple tough rounds.

Previous media reports said the proposed park could be built on a 10-square-kilometer site near Shanghai's Pudong airport, and Disney would take a 43 percent stake while a joint-venture company owned

by the local government would own 57 percent.

The first phase, completed as early as 2014, will include a theme park, a hotel and a shopping center. The total cost would be approximately 24 billion yuan, the *Shanghai Securities Journal* reported.

Experts supported the plan and said construction of the park would boost infrastructure construction and tourism in the city during the economic downturn.

The park would help drive businesses like hotels, infrastructure construction and transportation, Wen Yijun, industrial analyst with the Oriental Securities, said.

As Shanghai Disneyland would be larger than the park in Hong Kong, the tourism capacity would be accordingly bigger, Wen said.

It would create jobs not just in construction, but also in toy-manufacture, tourism, property development and advertising, he said.

Wen said the remaining uncertainty is when the project will begin, as it waits to clear numerous regulatory hurdles. It will be a while before Pudong starts building enchanted castles and indoor roller coasters.



Disney admitted a Shanghai park is in the works.

IC Photo

Market watch

SAIC to end relationship with Ssangyong Motor

By Huang Daohen

Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp (SAIC), the country's largest carmaker, is pulling out of a relationship with Ssangyong Motor as the troubled Korean carmaker turned to a Seoul court this week for bankruptcy protection.

That SAIC let Ssangyong enter court receivership is a clear indication that it has no intention of providing further financial assistance or making additional investments in the company, Jia Ke, an auto industry analyst with Guotai Junan securities, said.

Ssangyong filed for court protection because of a serious liquidity crisis and falling car sales. Its December sales were down 53 percent year-on-year.

SAIC said it is now evaluating the impact on its financial status of the bankruptcy protection. The value of its holdings was 1.85 billion yuan at the end of November. But officials at the company declined further comment on the matter.

SAIC and Ssangyong Motor's relationship marks the first

Chinese company to acquire a major overseas auto company. In 2005, the Shanghai-based carmaker took over Ssangyong for US \$500 million and became the largest shareholder with a 51.3-percent stake. It planned to use Ssangyong as a spearhead for expanding overseas markets and to help in developing own-brand vehicles.

But the joining of the two companies has been closely monitored not only by market insiders but also within the Korean company itself.

The Ssangyong labor union claimed its Chinese parent has not made the investments it promised. Instead, the union accuses SAIC of obtaining 30 years' worth of technology from the Korean company without paying royalties, the Seoul-based *JoongAng Daily* reported.

"I think the court receivership is a step to save the firm, and a capital injection requested by the labor union only has little meaning. Fundamental reform is needed to save the firm out of trouble," Jia said.



SAIC's decision to quit shocked workers at Ssangyong Motor.

IC Photo

Tuition for learning the market

The Ssangyong case was a tuition fee for Chinese businesses in the process of advancing into overseas markets, Zhao Xiao, economics professor with the University of Science and Technology Beijing, said.

"There are very few successful examples of Chinese companies buying foreign ones," Zhao said, adding that it was a good start for Chinese companies to expand overseas business.

However, Zhao said that the failure will prolong SAIC's quest to transform itself from being a

low-cost assembler for General Motors and Volkswagen. The company aimed to use Ssangyong's sport-utility vehicles to expand its own brand.

Chinese carmakers rely heavily on joint foreign peers. SAIC, for instance, relies on its partnerships with GM and Volkswagen for at least 75 percent of its vehicle sales.

"Now, SAIC may focus more on cooperation with GM and Volkswagen. It will be more cautious about expanding into overseas markets given the current economic environment," Zhao said.

Citi to reorganize private banking, shut unit

Citigroup will close its private banking unit in China, which targeted the country's new millionaires, and will fold the operations into its consumer banking arm as it streamlines its businesses, sources familiar with the situation said Tuesday.

Citigroup declined to comment on the restructuring plan but said it would continue to offer private banking services. "Citi remains entirely committed to the private banking space in China, and we will continue to invest in it," it said in a statement.

Several dozen employees at the three-year-old private banking unit will be transferred to other positions inside the bank, including the consumer banking business, said the sources, who declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The unit's closure comes as the New York-based lender, the third-largest US bank by assets, is close to selling a stake in its Smith Barney retail brokerage business to Morgan Stanley. (Agencies)

Yahoo allows 3721 to fade silently

By Wang Yu

Internet users are being redirected to cn.yahoo.com from 3721.com, one of the first Chinese search engines now infamous as a purveyor of spyware.

"It was only a technical problem that caused 3721.com to be inaccessible, but in truth, we gave up that part of our business last year," Wang Tong, a spokesman for Yahoo! China, said.

Founded by Zhou Hongyi, now chairman of Qihoo, in 1998, 3721 filled a gap in the Chinese search engine market. The Web site automatically installed a plug-in for Microsoft Internet Explorer which allowed users to type their query into the address bar in Chinese. The plug-in has been mostly replaced by similar services offered by Google and Baidu.

"A new computer would be hacked when a user first visited the 3721 Web site. Later on, the plug-in was packed with other tools such as multimedia players. It was hard for normal users to remove it from their computers without professional assistance," Vincent Wen, a network engineer, said.

In 2003, Yahoo acquired 3721 for US \$120 million (820 million yuan) and rebranded its plug-in as Yahoo! Assistant. In 2005, Yahoo! China was purchased by Alibaba.com, after which Zhou Hongyi left to start an anti-spyware business.

As the number of the Internet users swells, spyware has met with increasing hostility. Ma Yun, CEO of Alibaba.com, said the acquisition of 3721 was an encumbrance to the company and said he was unwilling to continue it.

Yahoo took over Koubei, a life information Web site, last year and started its SNS site Yahoo Relationship. Though similar Web sites remain unprofitable, it showed Alibaba's intent to convert Yahoo into an e-business.

"We are now focusing on our life services and electronics business. Abandoning 3721 became part of the Yahoo! China strategy under Alibaba," Wang said.

Zoo accused of abusing elderly panda

By Huang Daohen

A zookeeper in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province was suspended for mistreating Yong Ba, the elderly panda who gave birth to Tian Tian now at the National Zoo in Washington DC.

The Shenzhen Safari Park's panda keeper, surnamed Yuan, was suspended for denying Yong Ba food and "failing to prevent a souvenir shop from making money by forcing the panda to pose for photos with visitors," the park said in a statement over the weekend.

The shop, which charged 10 yuan for each photo, has been closed, according to Guangzhou-based newspaper *New Express*.

A blogger who identified herself as Qiuyueguisi first exposed the incident after she paid a visit to the park. On January 5, she posted a series of photos showing the poor living conditions of the 25-year-old sick giant panda on tianya.cn, one of the most popular online Chinese forums.

Yong Ba, named by the park as Panda No. 1, would only get a piece of apple on a stick after posing for a photo with visitors. Otherwise, she was fed only two plates of milk and three buns, the

blogger said in her posting.

Qiuyueguisi, a native of Jiangsu Province who is working in Shenzhen, also posted a set of photos showing Yong Ba was not in good health; and the panda knocking on the door of her shelter for food.

"Workers are trying to earn money by forcing the panda to sit for photos," she said.

The park administration could not be reached for comments as of press time, but Huang Xianda, the park's vice manager, was quoted by the *New Express* as saying that the sole panda is healthy and has good nutrition.

Huang said Yong Ba had a 20-square-meter sleeping area and a 50-square-meter playground, and food was supplied on demand.

Qiuyueguisi's post drew huge attention from the public and a response from related authorities. The China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Wolong, Sichuan Province, later began an investigation into the incident and on Monday said no mistreatment of the panda had occurred.

The center, however, requires the Shenzhen park to report weekly on the diet and health of Yong Ba.



Yong Ba receives apple after taking photos with tourists. The panda keeper's move sparks huge debate among the public.

Photo provided by tianya.cn

Comment

More funds needed

It is very expensive to keep pandas. There are only four zoos here that have them. They have to pay the Chinese government US \$1 million (6.8 million yuan) a year and any profits from borrowing the animals. The only way they can afford this is to take donations, at the zoo and on the Internet. They

also look for corporate sponsorships to help bring the cost down. It might be that Shenzhen just doesn't have the money to properly care for Yong Ba. Maybe that's why the zoo is trying so hard to sell souvenirs.

— Li Minxi, zoologist

Do something

I'm not surprised with the news. I've been to the Shanghai Zoo once

and it was the same, if not worse — one very sad-looking panda in a very small and dirty cage. Can it be that the zoo is so poor that it cannot afford to give the national treasure good food? What can be done for the "national treasure?"

— Samuel, consultant

Learn from Beijing Zoo

The Beijing Zoo is the only one

I know that treats animals right. Their staff members are morally and professionally competent at looking after the welfare of animals, and it's an iconic place. They simply built pens, then drop some raw meat or vegetables, so animals are in an environment similar to the wilderness.

— Ivy, embassy staff

Poor regulation, training and pay

This is due to poor regulatory control and lack of education. It will help if the zookeepers are properly trained, educated and paid appropriately.

When you pay peanuts, you get monkeys!

— Peter Yang, IT engineer

Debate of the week

Mao's niece suggests establishing Mao City

By Zheng Lu

"It is worth considering to establish a Mao Zedong City within the boundaries of Changsha, Zhuzhou and Xiangtan city," said a proposition submitted by Mao Xiaoling, Mao's niece, at this week's meeting of the 10th Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee of Hunan Province.

Through her seven propositions that relate to livelihood, Mao Xiaoling, a member of the Provincial Political Conference, expressed her ideas on "Bu Zheteng." The phrase, which was uttered by President Hu Jintao on a recent meeting, means "no fooling around" or "not making trouble."

Mao Xiaoling's suggestions focus on the issues of polarization and battling corruption. "My aim is to lessen messing about in our society," she told local media.

She conceived of the Mao Zedong City as a model urban area in China. Apart from comfortable living, the city should emphasize the spirit of selfless service. Hunan, Chairman Mao's home province, should take responsibility for demonstrating the meaning of communism, she said.

To build a Mao Zedong City in her point of view is to "provide the elderly with a sense of security." Mao Xiaoling confessed that she herself has experienced harassment from law enforcement officials, which she described as "zheteng" or causing trouble.

In the 1950s while Chairman Mao was still alive, someone suggested building a Mao Zedong City. But Mao did not give a reply, apparently because he objected to encouraging a personality cult, thus the proposition was shelved.

Six decades later, Mao Xiaoling's suggestion immediately stirred public reaction. Many questioned her motive. "Is it really necessary to build such a city? Mao lives in people's hearts, there is no need to build a city for him that is surrounded by corrupt cities. Isn't the act itself fooling around?" Hang Ying, a business man, said.

Another citizen, Wang Miansi, cited the Soviet Union's experience of establishing Leningrad and Stalingrad, whose names were later changed. He considers Mao Xiaoling's proposition a backward step in history. "Since Mao did not agree while he was still alive, he will not agree today as well."

People who see the proposition's historical value support Mao Xiaoling. "I believe that could help promote the culture of the past and hold it in honor of Mao's greatness — although it may be a publicity stunt and difficult to realize," Ricky Zhou, a media company staff, said.

Condom ads support women's football

By Jackie Zhang

A condom advertisement that appeared on the field at the Four Nation Women's Football Tournament in Guangzhou generated complaints and arguments this week.

According to a report in the *Chengdu Business Daily*, it is becoming more difficult for tournaments to find sponsors: few people watch women's football matches, so few companies are willing to put money in them.

"Although it is common to see condom advertisements in streets or in newspapers and magazines, it is still weird to see it on the field of a women's football match," Wang Ying, a female university student said. Some people said it was a pity that a Chinese women's football team had to accept a condom company's support due to its diffi-

cult financial situation.

Meanwhile, the condom company is glad to see that their sponsorship received a lot of buzz, said a company representative who declined to be identified. The representative said they were testing the effectiveness of that strategy. "Condom is only one of our products. I believe that we are the first to put condom ads on the football ground."

Grievance rewards set for bus drivers

By Zhang Dongya

Bus drivers who are able to calmly settle a dispute with passengers will be given a cash reward and other compensation, according to new regulations set by the Shenyang Municipal Traffic Bureau in Liaoning Province.

The scheme was named Weiqu Jiang or "grievance rewards," Shenyang-based *Huashang Morning Post* said. Similar rewards have been set up in other areas in the country, such as Xianyang in Shaanxi Province and Ningbo in Zhejiang Province, in order to encourage a harmonious relationship between bus drivers and their passengers.

A bus company said bus drivers are required to behave politely since the behavior of public transport workers is a window into quality of the municipality's service. But because there are ill-mannered passengers who assault drivers without reason, the scheme was set up to console innocent drivers who get hurt in the line of work.

Some citizens consider the reward a good idea, which can help assuage a driver's wounded pride. But others think the reward's name implies that passengers are violent and unreasonable, which will create more conflict between drivers and passengers.

Some lawyers said the rewards damage the dignity of a person and the spirit of the law. "To turn another cheek may avoid a conflict, but people are endowed by the law to protect their rights and interests," said Gu Zhiwei, a lawyer at Beijing's Mo Shaoping Law Firm.

Every year, there are hundreds of bus drivers given "grievance rewards" of between 200 and 1,000 yuan. Some of the drivers, who had been assaulted by passengers, said they felt embarrassed receiving the money, and did not know whether to cry or laugh.

Former US ambassadors gather to remember

By Jackie Zhang

The 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and US is a chance for the two countries to strengthen and further mutual friendship and understanding. The anniversary, which falls this year, is also an opportunity to gather people with similar experiences to recall the past.

On Wednesday, former US ambassadors Winston Lord, Joseph Prueher and Sharon Woodcock, the widow of Leonard Freel Woodcock, the first US ambassador to China in 1979, shared their China experiences with each other and discussed the future of Sino-US diplomacy.

Woodcock was posted here for two years and died in 2001. His

wife Sharon revisited China for the series of events to celebrate 30 years of China-US relations.

She recalled her first trip to the capital three decades ago. "When I first came to Beijing in the 1970s, there were very few Americans. There were not many things to buy and not much food available," she said. "At that time, China was a mystery to people in the US, and what they knew of the country came from novels. It was a very mixed image and I think that most people didn't believe the two countries could have a normal diplomatic relationship."

Prueher said that during that period, it was easy for people from the US to misunderstand China. "It was during the cold war between the US and the Soviet

Union. It was difficult for most Americans to tell Sovietism apart from Communism," he said.

But through the years, misunderstandings between the two countries were ironed out and they found common interests and established a friendly relationship. "By opening up to the outside world, China has grown as no one could have imagined," Lord said. "Over the decades, it found investment, found trade."

A week before President Barack Obama's inauguration, the former ambassadors expressed confidence in the future of Sino-US relations. "None of us can speak for President Obama. But I'm pretty confident he would continue the existing basic policy on China,"

Lord said. But he also pointed out the challenges that the two countries faced.

"Our relationship with each other is not only the most important, but is also the most complex for many reasons, one of which is that we have challenges as well as opportunities."

Lord said that China-US relations were going to be a mix of problems and frictions that need to be focused on and worked on. "One of the immediate ones is the economic challenge. But we have many more common interests. We can cooperate, we do cooperate and we could further cooperate on economic issues, on climate change, environment and energy, on drugs, on health, on piracy and regional conflicts," he said.

Canadian psychologist married to philanthropy

By Venus Lee

Rheal Desy, 68, has a doctorate in psychology from Canada's province of Quebec. He established a free home for handicapped elderly people in Jilin Province. All his funding came from friends. He has devoted his life to charity and expects nothing in return.

Home of joy and harmony

Desy's idea to build a home for others was born in 2004 when he learned about an empty lot in Jilin. With the help of friends, he went through official procedures to make his plan a reality.

After four years, Desy's dream, called the Home of Joy and Harmony, finally stood before his eyes. It cost people more than 6 million yuan, with the funds raised by Desy's friends in Hong Kong and Canada. It opened in November and is now home to 10 elderly, and employs 8 workers.

Desy's excitement is apparent when he talks about the home. "Our home is not just a shelter for disabled and lonely elders. We are a family. We encourage each member to be a useful member of society by doing whatever he or she can, and this instills in them a positive view of life," he said.

Life in the home is interesting. Every day, residents meet to talk about interesting topics. "We feel close when we laugh, joke and hang out together. People here learn how to live and enjoy life," Desy said.

But they have also gone through hard times. The home's preparation and construction were long and hard, Desy said. "We had a difficult time with the tedious application procedures. Meanwhile, we had to look after two elderly people at our temporary home, which was just a makeshift house," he said.

Connection with China

Desy's connection with China dates back to 1984 when he worked as a psychologist at a



Residents of the home have a meeting everyday.

Photos by Zhang Lianghua



Desy doing housework with another resident.

friend's hospital in Hong Kong. There he was introduced to Taoist concepts.

He became so fascinated with Taoism that in 1994, he decided to study Chinese and Taoism in Changchun, Jilin Province. He spent 10 years as a student at the city's Northeast Normal University. "Taoism for me is very pro-

found. My teacher recommended Laozi and Zhuangzi's books to me, but they were hard to read because they were written in the language of ancient times. I first had to overcome the language barrier, but I was motivated by my interest," Desy said.

He stresses that aside from having harmonious interpersonal relationships, humans should be in harmony with their environment. "He has indeed mastered the essence of Taoism," Zhang Lianghua, Desy's friend said of him.

Looking to the future

Desy said the name Home of Joy and Harmony has nothing to do with Taoism, and that it was sheer coincidence it matches

with the essence of Taoism. "The name came into my mind when I visited the Forbidden City, because many building names incorporated the word 'harmony,' for example, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, Central Harmony and Preserving Harmony." He hopes the name will bring luck into the home.

Desy said that money raised by his friends will soon run out. But he has plans that will enable him to continue running the home free of charge for residents. "We plan to run a farm in the near future. Aside from meeting our basic needs through the pigs we raise and plants we cultivate, some of our products can be sold in the market."

Phelps back to shoot commercial

By Han Manman

Michael Phelps has said many times he would return to the Water Cube, where he rewrote Olympic history by taking eight golds during the Beijing Games. His wish came true on Tuesday, even though he only stayed inside the cube for less than half an hour.

He is not back in Beijing to take a dip, however. This time around, he is shooting a TV commercial for automaker Mazda, which is reportedly paying him more than US \$1 million (6.8 million yuan) to endorse its brand in China. It is believed to be the largest single sponsorship deal for a foreign celebrity in the country.

Mazda vice president Yu Hongjiang said he was certain Phelps would help sell cars in China's growing car market. It is the world's third largest automobile market, but even here sales have slowed due to the global economic slump.

"We have very strong confidence in Phelps," Yu said. The auto industry has had some unsuccessful records with image ambassadors. But there is no doubt this will be successful ... Currently in China, nobody has the reputation that Phelps has."

Phelps is the "most expensive foreign celebrity" in China: a cap with his signature sells for US \$600 online. No wonder he refused to sign autographs for fans during his latest Beijing trip.

The commercial shoot took place at the Olympic water polo venue Tuesday and Phelps made a stop at the Water Cub.

"Being back here brings back some of the greatest memories of four months ago," he said. "Those memories are going to be with me throughout my life. It's pretty amazing to come back and have some of the same feelings that I had four months ago."

Life would be more relaxed after his success in Beijing, said Phelps, who is setting his sights on more glory at the London Olympics. "The next four years are going to be exciting years ... I will be able to try some new events, some different things in training that I haven't done before," he said. But "the next four years are going to be more relaxed and calmer."

US media reported after resting for several months, Phelps is ready to resume training on February 1 to prepare for the US National Championships from July 7 to 11, and the World Championships in Rome later that month.

Adventurous choreographer creates darkest fairytale ballet

By He Jianwei

Readers find darkness in many fairytales, but David Bintley's *Beauty and the Beast*, for the Birmingham Royal Ballet, is possibly its darkest ever performed. It was staged at the National Center for the Performing Arts from Tuesday to Thursday.

The lighting for the ballet was so dark that parts of the scenery were hardly discernible, while characters faded into the blackness like ghosts. But everything fit Bintley's narrative style, which is shrouded in gloom. "Darkness lurks at the heart of the fairytale. Children may like the Walt Disney's version, but I think they also like to be frightened," he said.

The 51-year-old choreographer read many versions of the fairytale and finally chose a classic French version. "This version depicts a lot of trivia. I like to tell my audience trivia," Bintley said.

But he did not just recreate the written story on stage. He tried to present audiences with something new. So his *Beauty and the Beast* was more than just a tale about a pretty girl who falls in love with a cursed prince.

When he first read the story as a young boy, he did not feel there was good reason for the prince to be turned into a beast. "I never found it very convincing, so I tried to find a better reason for him to be turned into a beast," he said.



A scene from *Beauty and the Beast*.

Photo provided by Birmingham Royal Ballet

So he put a parallel story in which a fox was turned into a wild girl. "It is her journey back to being a fox and the beast's journey back to being a man," he said.

He focused on the descent of all humans into beastly behavior and how noble and attractive animals are. "My ideas for the choreography came from all kinds of animals," he said.

Bintley's choice of composer was a Canadian, Glenn Buhr. Buhr's music was thick with the story's gothic flavor and dramatic momentum.

Bintley was a student at the Royal Ballet School in the 1970s, where Dame Ninette de Valois, founder of the Royal Ballet, noticed his skills. Valois respected his natural independence and, sensing that

his was an exceptional talent, took him under her wing.

In 1976, he joined Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, now Birmingham Royal Ballet, and quickly proved an outstanding character dancer. He became the artistic director of the ballet in 1995.

As a former dancer, Bintley knows that when a dancer gets injured, it is difficult for him or her to recover. "A lot of dancers are dancing with injury and are in pain a lot of the time," he said. So when he choreographs, he takes responsibility for dancers' injuries.

Despite a long and fulfilling career, there is no sense yet that Bintley is looking at retirement. "I've never given up anything except dancing and I did that because it physically hurt," he said.

Spanish artist ponders Chinese cities, buildings

By Gan Tian

Spanish artist Alicia Framis comes to town for an exhibit that opens tomorrow.

The exhibition, *New Buildings for China*, has 10 works by Chinese artist Yang Yongliang, and 10 more from Framis. Revolving around the issue of Chinese cities, buildings and the environment, the works are made of reworked photographs and 3D drawings.

"Yang's works discuss the process of constructing buildings, but my works are more conceptual," Framis said. She was working with the possibility of making new buildings for China. For example, she created an image of a place for people who are lost in a new culture, or a square for people who want to meet brothers or sisters.

"In Shanghai, people don't normally have brothers or sisters," Framis said.

In "Pirated Hall" the artist showed that in China, there are many fakes of top brands. The imitations are so well-made that people

have to ponder the meaning of "authentic."

Framis discussed the relationship between cities, buildings and the environment. First, buildings need to have a relationship with the people who live in them. A city and its buildings influence residents' way of life.

"We have to be very careful that we are making a human city, not a fictional city in real life," she said.

Framis has been living in Shanghai for two years, where she is preparing for a new exhibition of architectural models, and taking photos and doing drawings.

"I am living in this great city. Shanghai is very young. It is growing, which makes me feel young again," she said. That was one of the reasons she chose the city's architecture to work on.

Compared with Shanghai, Framis's hometown of Barcelona has old architecture.

"It is already established, not only in the architecture, but also value."

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Tango the night away

By Annie Wei

Nearby the Tree, a sister restaurant of The Tree in Sanlintun, has recently given tango aficionados space to practice their moves.

Julio Cruz, a Spanish designer who came to Beijing for work three years ago, gives tango lessons every Tuesday and Sunday night. Cruz became interested in tango after becoming friends with a foreign tango teacher who came to town to give a workshop.

During the Olympic Games, Cruz went back to Spain where he tangoed day and night. He came back to Beijing in November and decided to teach tango, said Lin Chih-Yun, a Taiwanese woman who is one of Cruz's students.

Not many know of Cruz's dance classes and so far, he only has around 10 students. But the gathering at Nearby the Tree appears fun: participants are served wine and snacks, and they can relax on a sofa and chat with each other.

Sabrina, a UNESCO consultant, who did not give her surname, said she discovered the class when she came to the restaurant for dinner one day.

Another student, Lake Hu, a design teacher from a local college who used to learn Chinese traditional dance, said tango is very different from other dance forms. "For example, Salsa is a party dance, while tango is more elegant. Tango is difficult because



Julio Cruz teaches and dances with students one by one.

Photo by Lin Chih-yun

you need to pay attention to how your body works," she said.

After his two-hour beginner's class, Cruz stays for Milonga – a tango dance party with tango music and open to everyone.

At 9 or 10 pm, more dancers show up, including some whose tango skills are quite advanced. Tracy, who did not give her surname, a Chinese woman who began learning tango eight months ago, already has pretty

impressive skills.

"It's one or two hours of dance exercise for me. If you really like it, you will find time to learn the dance," she said.

When asked for tango tips, she said a dancer needs to watch, think and practice. She also joins various tango workshops, which invites teachers from all over the world. But she considers Cruz to be the best Milonga dancer in town.

Where to learn tango

Nearby the Tree

A restaurant that specializes in pizza and pasta.

Every Tuesday 7-9 pm dance lessons;

9 pm – 12 am Milonga

Every Sunday 5-7 pm dance lessons;

7-9 pm Milonga

Where: 32A Xi Jie, Sanlitun Bar street, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6413 1522

Julio Cruz (13439263234) offers private class in Spanish and English and venue could be assigned by the student.

If one needs help in Chinese, can contact Leona Lin at 13910032389.

Sino-Chu bar and restaurant

Every Thursday 8:30-9:30 pm dance classes; 9:30 pm – 12 am Milonga

Every Sunday 9 pm – 12 am Milonga

Where: 18 Liangmahe Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Web site: sinochu.com

TangoRen

It is a nonprofit organization created to organize and promote Argentinean Tango events, classes and Milongas in Beijing. This yahoo! group also serves as a platform for disseminating information on international tango events to the local community. It currently has three weekly tango events in the city. For more information, check out groups.yahoo.com/group/TangoRen/.

'Neighborhood Festival' in Wangjing



By Zhao Hongyi

A foreign resident enjoyed Bingtang Hulu – a traditional snack of caramelized crabapples on skewers – in the city's northeastern community of Wangjing last weekend.

Nearly 100 expats in Wangjing from 20 countries and regions including South Korea, the US, Germany, Sweden and Kazakhstan joined their Chinese neighbors in celebrating the Fifth "Neighborhood Festival."

Wangjing, the biggest residential community in Asia in the 1990s, has become Beijing's largest expat area with close to 50,000 foreign residents. Most are from South Korea, which earned the community the nickname "Korean Town."

Beijing has a number of other famous areas where foreigners live, including the CBD and Wudaokou. Five years ago, the city's expat communities started the "Neighbourhood Festival," just days before the Spring Festival in an effort to make foreigners feel at home in Beijing.

Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Event

2008-2009 UCI Track Cycling World

Cup Classics

The 2008-2009 International Cycling Union (UCI) Track Cycling World Cup Classics (Beijing) will take place from today until Sunday at the Laoshan Velodrome, the track cycling venue for Beijing Olympics. There are nine men's and seven women's event in the competition sponsored by the Chinese Cycling Association and the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Sport. About 300 riders, officials and technicians from more than 40 nations and regions will participate in the world cup.

When: January 16-18, 6:30-10 am

Where: Laoshan Velodrome, Fifth Ring Road, Shijingshan District

Tel: 400 810 1887

Cost: 50 yuan

Scuba Diving for Adults

A six-week course for adventure-lovers who have always wanted to go diving on their holiday (depth restriction is 30 meters). Parents can do the course together with their children. Students will need to purchase their own mask and snorkel, which may be bought from the instructor.

When: Jan 17, 10:30 am – 12 pm

Where: Legend Garden Campus, 89 Capital Airport Road, Shunyi District

Tel: 6454 9127

Cost: 3,400 yuan

Dog Obedience Workshop

Learn to teach your dog basic obedience commands in a pet-friendly way with the help of Joan Li, an instructor certified by the Animal Behavior College of the US. Following specifications by the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Program, basic commands are given orally and through gestures, with hands-on practice in class. Each lesson lasts an hour. The curriculum is as follows: orientation, etiquette, markers, focus, sit and stationary heel; learn come, down and stay; learn loose leash walking, wait and leave it; learn heel.

When: Every Saturday 3-4 pm

Where: To be announced

Contact: 13426333693

Cost: 1,300 yuan per dog

(By Wei Ying)

Performances, workshops, shows boom in the New Year

By Gan Tian

The Beijing Actors Workshop, a local theater group, will stage some of its most-awaited productions next month.

"Dirty Dance: One Night in Beijing" will be presented at the Peng Hao Theatre at 7:30 pm from February 12 to 15. Tickets booked in advance cost 75 yuan, while they are 90 yuan at the door. Ticket includes a glass of wine and dessert. Email cipabeijing@gmail.com for ticket reservations.

An improv show is in store for Valentine's Day. Audiences will get to interact with performers as actors eat, dance, sing and fall in love. The program is presented by local performing arts groups, including the Beijing Actors Workshop, BITE, Swing

Beijing, Beijing Improv, Beijing Jugglers and Beijing Trick Bike.

Every Monday beginning February 16, there will be "Movie and Modern Drama Mondays" from 7:30 to 9:30 pm at Peng Hao Theatre. Actors and aspiring actors will read from screenplays of famous movies and classic films, as well as plays from modern dramatists such as Neil Simon, Christopher Durang, Tennessee Williams and Tom Stoppard. Tickets are 5 yuan each.

Every Saturday beginning February 21, "Physical Theatre Workshop" will be held at Yugong Yishan. This workshop is based on body experiences focusing on improving the actor's body awareness through techniques of avant-garde theater and contem-

porary dance. Texts, videos and films will be used to facilitate a debate at the end of each session and to stimulate discussions about construction of the body in life and in performance. Actors, performers, dancers, visual artists interested in body practice, avant-garde theater, dance theater and body expression can benefit from this.

Every other Saturday, beginning February 7, "Advanced Screenwriting Workshop" will be held from 7 to 9 pm at Peng Hao Theatre. Attendees should bring their own screenplay. They will work with local screenwriters and actors to perfect their original work. Skills and information provided in this workshop may lead to a movie production opportunity. The workshop fee is 25 yuan.

Contaminant found in imported dog food

By Venus Lee

The distributor of Optima dog food has issued a recall of the product after a dozen dogs that consumed it in the Yangtze Delta were reported dead. The animals died of liver complications after eating Optima Puppy Lamb and Rice Dry Dog Food, a US brand.

Optima is made by Nashville, Tennessee-based Doane Pet Care, but it was not clear as of press time if the pet food sold in China was made in the US.

No Optima-linked deaths have been reported in Beijing, the China Agricultural University Veterinary Hospital, Puppytown Hospital and Zhiai Pet Hospital told *Beijing Today*. But as a precaution, Optima dog food has been taken off shelves in town.

Pet food stores in the city have removed Optima products dated

between August and September last year.

"Workers in the pet industry strictly complied with the emergency recall," a staff at Wenxin Tiandi Pet House said. "Our company has suspended the sale of Optima for several weeks now."

Staff at the Shanghai Naughty Family Pet Company, a pet clinic, said they have seen at least 10 dogs fall ill after eating Optima dog food. Two have died and a third remains sick. "These dogs were fussy about their food, had diarrhea and vomited, all symptoms of aflatoxin exposure," staff at the clinic said. Worried pet owners came in to have their pets checked after reading local news reports about the problem, they said.

According to the Shanghai Animal Health Inspection Institute, aflatoxin is a naturally occurring



Optima dog food was taken off Beijing shelves. Photo by Yu Xiao

toxic and carcinogenic chemical that comes from fungus found in grains, spices and nuts. It can cause severe liver damage.

Chinese message boards online are abuzz with talk about Optima. Many netizens have called on dog owners to stop feeding their pets

Optima products.

China's quality watchdog Tuesday denied ever authorizing the import of Optima brand dog food. Local entry-exit inspection and quarantine units across the country have also never allowed the import of such dog food.

Discounts and freebies to attract tourists

By Jackie Zhang

During the Spring Festival holiday, parks, scenic spots and hotels in Beijing will offer promotions in order to stimulate tourism, the city's tourism authority said.

The Beijing Tourism Administration said last week that 20,000 tickets to both tourist spots and temple fairs will be given for free through travel agencies and tourism offices. Another 10,000 free tickets to the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube will be handed out as well.

On February 9 and 15, the Water Cube will be open for free to specific groups, including university students and people under age 17. Ordinarily, entrance to the cube costs 30 yuan.

Hundreds of parks and scenic spots, including the Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, will offer ticket discounts of 60 to 80 percent.



Historic restaurants in Qianmen, Xuanwu District, also offer discounts.

CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

My puppy has been scratching his ears till he yelps and I want to find a good, preferably Western-educated, vet to take a good look at him. Money is no issue as I consider my dog one of my children. Can you tell me if there are any good vets in Chaoyang District?

You can see British veterinarian Tony Beck. His address is 7 Beisanhuan Zhong Lu (300 meters west of Anhua Qiao), Xicheng District. Tel: 6202 3827. You can also visit the International Center for Veterinary Services, which has both Western and Chinese veterinarians. Where: 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Anjialou, Chaoyang District. Tel: 8456 1939.

I just brought the Nintendo Wii from my home country and wanted to know where I could get Wii Fit in town?

Most gamers in Beijing go to shops along Gulou Dongdajie in Dongcheng District for PlayStation3, PlayStation Portable or Xbox software. A variety of video game accessories is also available there. If you are wary of small shops, check for recommendations on tgbus.com/shop/beijing/. The Web site is one of the most authoritative video gaming sites in the country and has opened a chain of stores. It has a good reputation.

Do you know of a company in Beijing that offers storage facilities?

Local storage companies charge based on how much space your things occupy. Check out cangku88.cn. The price quoted on their homepage is 0.5 yuan per square meters per day.

(By Wang Yu)

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Question

An artist's fascination with the hereafter

A slim man in a military uniform wrathfully pointed at viewers in the hall at the Wall Art Museum. His eyes were big and his mouth open. Datong DaZhang's portrait hangs on the wall before an installation titled "The Journey through Death."

The exhibition shows 30 oil paintings and photos that recorded performance art activities, installations, sketches and artists' manuscripts.

Life and death the essence of art

When the vanguard art group was founded in 1987 by DaZhang, it was the only contemporary art group in Datong, Shanxi Province. In the beginning there were five members. The name "WR" was the abbreviation of pinyin names of the five artists.

WR group performed "Mourning" at the China Modern Art Exhibition in China Art Gallery in Beijing 20 years ago. Its works did not meet with public acceptance. "Someone will love our works 20 years from now," DaZhang said at that time.

WR's last exhibition was in 1993. The group had already disbanded.

DaZhang, originally named Zhang Shengquan, was born in 1955 and joined the army in 1970 and served in Yunnan Province. He was discharged in 1974 and studied singing, painting, litera-

ture, history and philosophy on his own.

During his military service, he stayed in a humid and cold cave for a long time. The radiation from a uranium mine near the cave left him with chronic diseases the rest of his life, such as rheumatoid arthritis, insomnia and manic depression.

"His early experience reflects the heroism and pessimism of his soul and also influenced his works," Wen Pulin, curator of the exhibition, said.

DaZhang's first exhibited piece was an oil painting, "Crematorium," which was shown as part of "My World" in Datong in 1986. The black color in the painting came from black shoe polish.

The work shocked viewers at that time, because the hall stunk of shoe polish. "His work reminded us of Theodore Gericault's (French painter and lithographer of the 19th century and a pioneer of the Romantic Movement) style," Wen said.

Coincidentally, DaZhang was cremated in the same crematorium he painted for this first exhibition. "Is it predestination? It seems that his end went back to the beginning," the curator said.

Suicide a masterpiece

After disbanding, DaZhang started to share his art ideas with the outside world through a mailing art.

In 1998, due to his illnesses, DaZhang lost his front teeth and



DaZhang in 1970



DaZhang in Lhasa



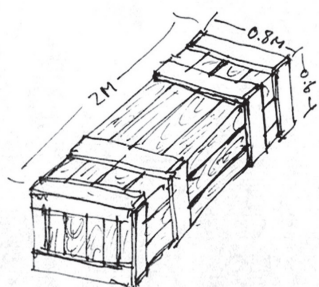
The room DaZhang lived

《73kg人肉》

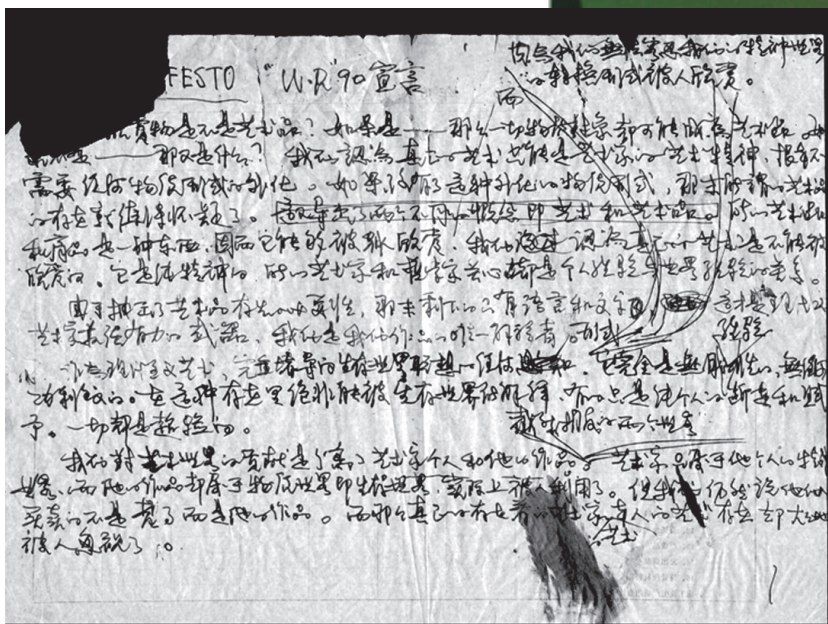
——行装计划. 1992年创作

将我自己身体物品——牛肉的假象，通过铁路快件由大同运到北京。

- 发物人、收物人 ~~都是我~~ 物品都是我。
- 聘请监督人。
- 寄件体面以行外房称美。
- 加贴封条。



Sketch of 73kg Human Flesh



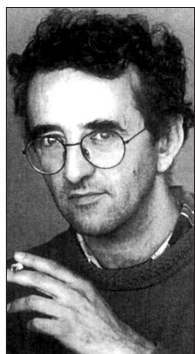
The Journey Through Death WR Group Retrospective Ex

Where: The Wall Art Museum, 34 Dong

When: Until January 22, 10 am - 5 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6564 8233 ext 801



Unfinished work revives Chilean writer



By Venus Lee

Literary celebrity Roberto Bolaño won the 1999 Romulo Gallegos Prize with his *The Savage Detectives*, which established him as one of the most talented and inventive novelists writing in Spanish.

2666 (translated by Natasha Wimmer, 912pp, Farrar, Straus and Giroux Press, US \$19.80), his final novel, is the primary effort of the last five years of his life. The English-language translation was published in the US on November 11, 2008.

The book was on the Top 10 New York Times 2008 Book List. "Bolaño won the race to the finish line in writing what he plainly intended, in his self-interrogating way, was a master statement. Indeed, he produced not only a supreme capstone to his own vaulting ambition, but a landmark in what's possible for the novel as a form in our increasingly, and terrifyingly, post-national world," the New York Times Book Review said.

"2666" is the permanently mysterious title of a Bolaño manuscript rescued from his desk after his passing. The story set in the fictional city of Santa Teresa, where many young women are murdered and where a mysterious novelist and German World War II veteran, Benno von Archimboldi, might be hiding.

The novel consists of five book-length sections with only a few thematic and plot connections. Each section is autonomous in life and form. All five parts

are linked by varying degrees of concern with the unsolved murders of 300 young, poor, mostly uneducated Mexican women in Ciudad Juárez (Santa Teresa in the novel).

The inseparable dangers of life and literature, and the relationship of life to literature, were the constant themes of Bolaño's writings.

Although *2666* was unfinished when the author died of liver failure in 2003, that did not prevent readers and critics from declaring it his masterpiece. The book was published posthumously in Spanish in 2004 to tremendous acclaim.

The English version, for better or worse, does not try to smooth over the rough spots or connect things which Bolaño died before he could do.

Natasha Wimmer, the translator, said it was a big challenge. After translating certain lines, she had to actively restrain herself from prettying them up.

She said she had a hard time looking at the finished translation for months. "It's painful. I think writers feel the same way, but for translators, it's almost worse because there are so many compromises. You know there are places where you could have done a better job," she said.

"This is a big work of fiction. A messy, extensive challenge that fulfills Bolaño's own slightly veiled reference to his ambitions, to eschew the neat and beautiful for the challenging," Wimmer said.

Hong Kong's history through fashion

By He Jianwei

2007 was the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China. Many Hong Kong publications ran stories about how ordinary life has changed the last 10 years.

"Although Hong Kong returned on July 1, 1997, the changes began even earlier. So I focused on the time 10 years before (1987) and after 1997 to record what I experienced in these 20 years," Winifred Lai, the author of *My Fashion Moments 87-07* (292pp, Shandong People's Press, 98 yuan), said.

As a former fashion editor and critic, Lai saw the changes through the lens of fashion and style development. "It was like a circle from 1987 to 2007, and now it seems like a new beginning," she said, showing two photos from 1987 and 2007 in which she had the same hairstyle.

While fashion is by definition timely, and its proper place is in magazines not books, moments in fashion can be recorded. "If I did not write everything down, the next generation would not know about this period of (fashion) history," she said.

The book is neither an autobiography nor a fashion book. "It is about myself, the people I encountered and the Hong Kong I experienced. The common element is that all these things are interrelated with fashion," she said.

Lai takes readers back to Hong

Kong in the late 1980s: a time when the island was ruled by Great Britain both politically and culturally. Brit-pop had an immense influence on the residents' lives. "Musicians became my style reference," she said.

In her 20-year career in the fashion field, Lai saw the independent female images of the 1980s, grunge style of the 1990s and globalization's influence on a new century.

Hong Kong, in the last 20 years, lost its native culture and rebuilt

itself. Lai found touchstones from her childhood have vanished: the demolition of the island's ageing docks took with it a spirit that combined British and Chinese culture.

Fashion is more than clothing: it is a symbol of individual taste, social hierarchy and vanity, she

said. "Do it with style" is Lai's philosophy, and she makes readers rethink how an individual can stand out in an increasingly globalized world.

She began work on the traditional Chinese version of the book in June 2007 and finished by September. It was one of the best sellers of its year.

The simplified Chinese version was published last month. The designs are the same, and to retain its original feel some sentences of the book were left in Cantonese.



Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

Outliers: The Story of Success
By Malcolm Gladwell, 320pp, Penguin UK, US \$19.50

In this book, Malcolm Gladwell takes the reader on an invigorating intellectual journey to show what makes an over-achiever. He reveals that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too

little attention to where successful people are from: their culture, their family and their generation. Gladwell examines how the careers of Bill Gates and the performance of world-class football players are alike; what top fighter pilots and The Beatles have in common; why so many lawyers are Jewish; why Asians are good at math; and why it is correct to say that the mathematician who solved Fermat's Theo-

rem is not a genius.

The Great Game

By Peter Hopkirk, 564pp, Kodansha International, US \$18.00

The book is an epic stand-off between two superpowers of the nineteenth century – Victorian Britain and Czarist Russia – for the riches of India and the East. Based on meticulous scholarship and on-the-spot research, Peter Hopkirk's immensely

readable account covers history at the core of today's geopolitics. **Twilight (Twilight Saga)**

By Stephenie Meyer, 464pp, ATOM, US \$10.47

When 17-year-old Isabella Swan moves to Forks, Washington to live with her father, she expects that her new life will be as dull as the town. But in spite of her awkward manner and low

expectations, she finds that her new classmates are drawn to the pale, dark-haired new girl in town. But not so for the Cullen family. The five adopted brothers and sisters prefer their own company and make no exception for Bella. She is convinced that Edward Cullen in particular hates her, but feels a strange attraction to him, although his hostility makes her feel almost physically ill.

(By He Jianwei)



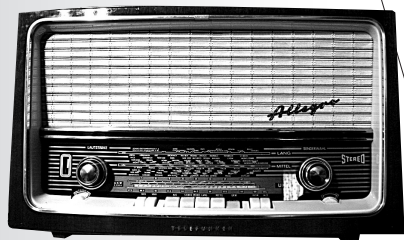
Modern music in antique sounds



Yang Ziyi hopes his museum will help spread appreciation of antique sound.

By Wang Yu

Old homemade radio receivers were a common sight at local handicraft markets the last few years. But renewed interest in radio collection has bumped the once 50-yuan price tag for a well preserved radio to hundreds of yuan. The collectors come from every class but all share a common enjoyment of sounds from the past.



Old but beautiful voice

Although collectors may differ on the cutoff date for what makes an "antique" radio, most prefer something 50 or more years old, or pre-World War II era: the time of vacuum tube sets and the first five years of transistor sets.

These old radios are made of wood with delicate craftsmanship. Some sound better or at least warmer than modern stereo systems. The sound quality of antique radios depends on the technology used in the set. The type of the speaker is the main differentiator, with mains and battery also making a significant difference in quality.

Most pre-1950s radios remain uncataloged by collectors due to rarity or limited availability. Among the foreign machines, products from European manufacturers fetch the highest prices. Though antique radio collectors are still a niche group compared with porcelain collectors, the group's focus is split into different categories.

"Most of these radios were born decades before I came to this world. But when you turn on one of them and wait for the tubes to warm up, you can hear modern music from the old speakers. It's a totally different experience than listening to digital music players," Haibian, a collector, wrote in his blog.

City's top collectors

Yang Ziyi, one of the top collectors in Beijing shifted his attention from porcelains to antique radios in 2005. "Collecting old things is a habit for me. But there are too many counterfeits on the market. Porcelain collecting has become an investment, and it's very hard for a beginner to find real antiques without spending a ton of money," Yang said.

The cost of making a fake antique porcelain is low, but the technique and the high cost of wood, electronic components and other accessories keep the counterfeit makers out of the radio circle. "The only trick a dealer can make is changing some old components to newer ones from other old radios to keep their goods in good condition," Yang said.

Qi Jiangang who works in a construction company has been a radio lover since childhood. "I graduated from college in 2005 and began collect-

ing radios with my first paycheck. At that time old radios were valuable collectors' items and I bought a Shanghai-made Hongdeng radio for 50 yuan," Qi said.

Yang Ziyi is now 37. He said the homemade radios remind collectors of their childhoods, though they are still just copies of foreign products. Only old German radios are the most sought-after.

"Grundig, Saba, Telefunken, Nordmende, Blaupunkt, these brands are every collector's dream. With the wooden bodies, they can be displayed in any well decorated room as a piece of furniture, and that's even without appreciating their exquisite sound," Yang said. He turned on one of his Grundig radios and one of Haydn's symphonies came out of its four speakers. The sound of vintage orchestra filled his small living room.

As the city's top collectors, Yang and Qi only look for precious radios from Western countries, especially Germany. "All of my German machines were bought on eBay from foreign collectors. Such old radios are comparatively easy to find in Europe," Yang said.

But overseas delivery is always a big problem for collectors and guaranteed way to lose money. "The antique radios are damageable due to their age and wooden bodies. Almost 70 percent of the radios I bought were broken during delivery. Though there are skilled craftsmen who can fix them well, the radios' value drops," Yang said.

An antique German radio costs at least 4,000 yuan excluding deliver fees. If it reaches China safely, the price may climb to 10,000 yuan. The price difference makes it possible for professional collectors like Yang to sell some off pieces and use the money to invest in new acquisitions.

"Now I spend about 5,000 to 10,000 yuan collecting radios every month," Qi said.

But not every piece can be traded. One of Yang's radios was bought from an old man in Germany for just 10 yuan. "It was an auction on eBay and I was the only buyer who bid. He was about to remove the auction listing but when I told him I am in China, he sold it to me because he used to live in Suzhou and was looking forward to coming back," Yang said.

"I've made many German friends during my trades, and there are also stories attached to the machines that are more valuable than money," Yang said.



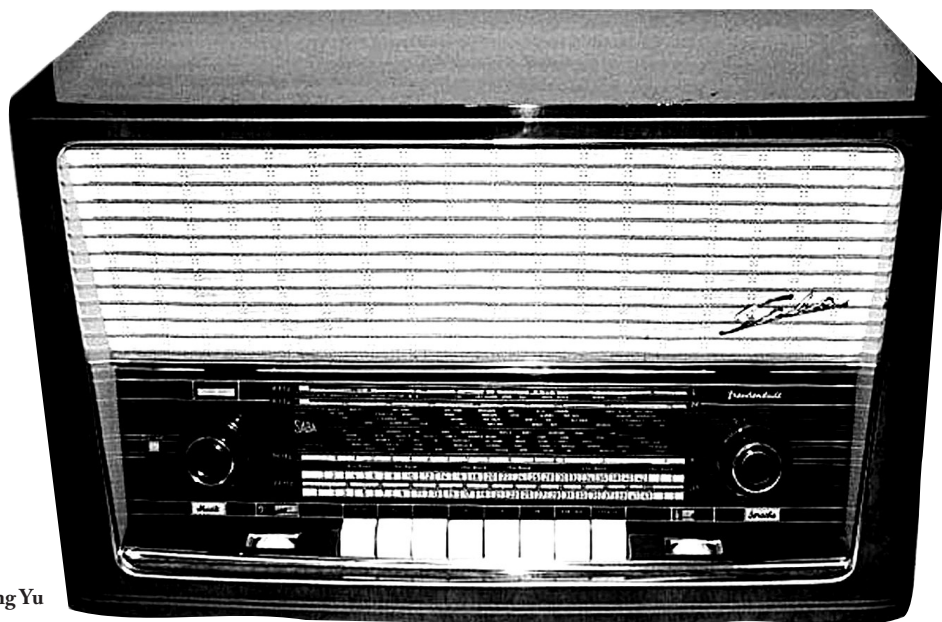
Radio museum on the way

Qi Jiangang's collection is up to about 500 radios. Yang Ziyi also has a big basement to store his treasures. He started his Jiangjun Guan Studio to lease radios to producers of TV dramas and movies.

"Many of the pieces are damaged in delivery and repaired after we receive them. Since they can only be sold at a low price in the market, we plan to recreate their value by building a radio museum," Yang said.

The museum will be located in 798 Art District and will open early this year. "Our museum is a good supplement to the official museums, and it will be free to visitors," Yang said. "My other collections, such as old TVs, cameras and cinematographs, will also go in the museum," Qi said.

"The museum is a part of our collection. I can also move some radios out of my apartment to the museum and make more room for myself," Yang Ziyi said with a smile. "These radios don't belong in a dark basement. They need to be touched by people."



Photos by Wang Yu

Technologies of city walks

By Gan Tian

Taking a walk around town this time of the year is not a good idea. But with spring nearing and days getting warmer, who wants to stay indoors? *Beijing Today* gives readers who have an itch to stroll two suggestions: those who want to take a stroll downtown or go window shopping can find proper walking shoes at Rockport; those who would rather go hiking or mountain climbing can head to Columbia for appropriate footwear.

Comfort is style

Making its way to China in 2007, shoemaker Rockport has already built a reputation in the US.

Rockport has three kinds of footwear to promote comfortable long-distance walks. Dynamic Suspension provides a cushion that moves air into the foot-bed to react with every step. Hydro-shield is made of waterproof, breathable materials that protect feet from harsh weather, keeping them dry and comfortable. Meanwhile, its adidas Torsion System provides mid-foot support.

For spring and summer this year, Rockport has unveiled its new "Choose to Walk" model. The Karusan shoe (1,499 yuan) is available in two patterns. With a firm shoe bed and a full grain leather upper, it is especially designed for businessmen who spend a lot of time outdoors. People who like to

take walks in winter find that their feet easily get sweaty, particularly if they are wearing tight shoes. Karusan solves this problem with Kinetic Air Circulator, a technology featuring polyurethane foam that promotes air flow for cooler, more comfortable feet.

Rockport Shin Kong Place

Where: F4, Shin Kong Place, 87 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6533 1350

Rockport APM

Where: 219, F2, APM, 138 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6525 8664

Rockport SOGO

Where: F2, SOGO New Tower, 8 Xuanwumen Wai Dajie, Xuanwu District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6310 4881



Photos provided by Rockport

Hungry for adventure

Columbia, one of the world's best-known sportswear brands, recently opened the Columbia Omni Science Center at APM Shopping Plaza.

Omni-Tech, what the company regards as one of its greatest footwear innovations, provides all-weather protection and is 80 times more waterproof than an umbrella. At the same time, it is 20 times more breathable than the material that human perspiration requires.

In recent years, Columbia has focused on developing its footwear category. One of these, Omni-Grip is a sticky rubber compound developed for the five most popu-

lar outdoor activities – trail, hiking, casual outdoor, water sports and winter sports. Its outsole, designed in the grip and tread pattern, provides a combination of traction and durability for specific surfaces, while keeping feet comfortable.

Launched in 2006, Omni-Fresh is an anti-bacterial footwear technology that keeps feet dry and odor-free. Shoppers will find this in Columbia sandals, popular in the hot summer season.

Columbia Chongwenmen

Where: F3, Phase 2, 3 Chongwenmen Wai Dajie, Chongwen District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

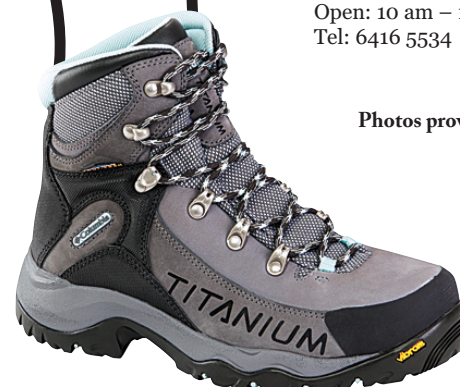
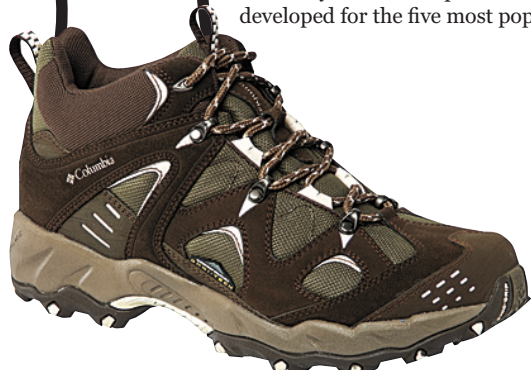
Tel: 6708 0010

Columbia Sanlitun

Where: S8, The Village at Sanlitun, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6416 5534



Photos provided by Columbia

Going beyond Hubei's Wuchang Fish



Rich flavor of Chu Culture

Hongfanqie, or Red Tomato, opened its first restaurant in 1998 and now has four branches in town. Considered the pioneer of Hubei Cuisine in Beijing, its newest – and flagship – restaurant is at the Grand Skylight CATIC Hotel, which gives diners a good view of the neighboring Bird's Nest stadium.

All Hongfanqie restaurants are decorated with articles that reflect the rich Chu Culture, such as the Bianzhong, a classic set of bells; the Guzheng, a traditional musical instrument; as well as lacquerware in Chu style. Private rooms are named after ancient Chu tales, including "Three Visits to the Thatched Cottage" and "Three Sworn Brothers at Taoyuan" from the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

E cai combines the style of Hubei's Wuhan, Huangzhou and Jingzhou food. Hongfanqie features the Jingzhou style, which specializes in fish meat and steaming as the primary method of cooking.

One specialty of Hubei Cuisine, also highly recommended by Hongfanqie customers, is Shaguo Huiyu or Whirlpool Fish in Casserole (136 yuan per kilogram). The whirlpool fish, which lives in the Jingjiang portion of the Yangtze River and has delicate meat, is cooked boneless in organic tomato sauce.

Hongfanqie's cooking ingredients are transported by train from Wuhan, Hubei's capital. Targeting higher-end customers, dishes at its Bird's Nest branch are 10 percent more expensive than its other locations. It also charges a 10-percent service charge.

Hongfanqie

Where: 1F, Grand Skylight CATIC Hotel, 18 Beichen Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9:30 pm

Tel: 8498 1055

By Zhang Dongya

This year, the China Cuisine Association is considering renaming Hubei Cuisine from E cai to Chu cai. Hubei Province's abbreviated name is E, thus its food is called E cai. But in ancient times, the province was known as the State of Chu – the cradle of one of the most important aspects of Chinese culture.

Hubei Cuisine is known for its freshwater fish dishes, and features tender meat, crisp bones and thick soups that go well with rice. E cai, however, is not as well known as one of the "great cuisines" like Sichuan or Hunan cuisine. The association wants to change its name to Chu cai to promote its development.

Though some people doubt that the name-change would do any good, at the very least, it would give Hubei Cuisine some much needed publicity. Its Wuchang Fish dish gained national fame after Chairman Mao lavishly praised its taste and mentioned it in one famous poem.

But Hubei Cuisine is much more than Wuchang Fish. To put diners on the path to better appreciating E cai, *Beijing Today* recommends some Hubei restaurants to visit.



Doupo Chicken in a hot pot

Photos provided by Hongfanqie Group



Western influences for the young

Anxiang Fudong, or perfume floats, opened in September, is a new restaurant under the Hongfanqie Group, which was specially conceptualized for a younger generation of diners.

Designed like a modern, Western bar, it has a chic and tranquil atmosphere. Its two-story building can accommodate about 250 people. There are two non-smoking areas on the first floor, and another one upstairs. The restaurant is divided into several dining areas, each with its own temperature control. It offers Wi-Fi service for laptop computers, with sockets for each table.

It has private rooms that can hold 12 people, and smaller ones with a seating capacity of four to six. Besides its own temperature control, the bigger private rooms have volume control for the background music.

Food at Anxiang Fudong is lighter, in contrast to Hubei cuisine's traditional thick flavoring. Doupo Chicken Hot Pot (58 yuan large dish; 38 yuan small dish), which originates from Shadoguan County and is a Hubei favorite, is one of the restaurant's signature dishes. It is available in a small pot for two to three diners, and a bigger pot for seven to eight people. Lami Xianxia or Spicy Shrimps (48 yuan) is freshwater shrimps cooked with chili and pepper pickled sauce.

Another chicken dish, Jiaoxing Chicken (47 yuan), uses native roosters that roam free in the countryside. As they are more muscular compared to boiler chicken, their meat is a bit tough, but has a distinctive flavor.

The restaurant has several ongoing promotions: Diners on the first floor who spend at least 100 yuan will receive a voucher worth 50 yuan. A table that includes someone from Hubei will get 40 percent off the bill.

Anxiang Fudong

Where: Anxiang Fudong, Jixiangli Hutong, 206 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6813 1588

Traditional Hubei dishes

Every provincial government has an office in Beijing, and so does Hubei. Hubei officials usually congregate or hold meetings at the Hubei Hotel, which serves traditional E cai.

At the top of its menu is the famed Steamed Wuchang Fish (76 yuan per kilogram). With a small head, a flat body and tender meat, Wuchang fish is high in protein. There are many ways to cook the fish, but steaming it is most common among Hubei people.

The restaurant also offers famous local snacks such as Wuhan's Regan Mian (8 yuan), hot and dry noodles flavored with a sesame sauce.

With its quality food and relaxing atmosphere, The Hubei Hotel is always the first choice for Hubei natives who want to get together and reminisce about their hometown.

Hubei Hotel

Where: 1F, Hubei Hotel, 36 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

Open: 11:30 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6217 2288



Shaguo Huiyu, or Whirlpool Fish



Shaguo Jiayu, Turtle in Casserole

1980s New York in the eyes of Ai Weiwei

By Li Jing

Ai Weiwei is an important contemporary artist, well-recognized for his sculptures, installations and architecture.

Early in 1983, he went to New York and spent a decade living in the city before returning to Beijing. During that period, Ai took pictures of the people he met, places he went, his friends, his neighborhood, the city streets – using up 350 rolls of film.

"At that time, I did not really have anything to do. I was just hanging out, whiling away time by taking pictures," Ai said. His 12 years abroad were marked by absolute individual freedom coupled with boredom, which gives his photographs the feel of a documentary.

5 Friday, January 16

Exhibition 2009 New Year Print Art Festival

Where: Amelie Art Gallery, (between Red Gate and White Space Gallery), 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 6, daily except Monday, 11 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6530 7048

PIN – Videotheque Artists' Group Exhibition

This is the gallery's first show for 2009, an extension of its Videotheque project launched in September.

Where: ShanghART Beijing, 261 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 22, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 3202

Staging Silence – Hans Op de Beeck Solo Exhibition

Based on the ideas of detachment and loss of self in contemporary times, the artist built fictional domestic urban locations and situations. Hans Op de Beeck named the exhibition "Staging Silence," because all the works refer to the staged image, which invites silence and reflection.

Where: Galleria Continua, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 31, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6436 1005

Movie

Moulin Rouge

Director Baz Luhrmann brings together gorgeous period design and modern pop tunes to create a tragicomedy motion picture experience.

Where: Instituto Cervantes in Beijing, A1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666

The Young Girls of Rochefort

This classic 1967 French musical comedy tells the story of a fair that brings new life to the town of Rochefort and sends two young girls on a quest for love.

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

He captured the history, culture and atmosphere of 1980s New York from the perspective of an outsider.

Three Shadows Photography Art Center organized the exhibit because "these photographs trace the beginnings of Ai Weiwei's conceptual art practice," the gallery said.

Organizing Ai's old photographs was not easy, the gallery's founders said. After 20 years in storage, they were in complete disarray. The 350 rolls of film that spanned a decade of work had accumulated into a mass of unintelligible faces, places, artworks and events. It took two years to archive the 10,000 images, but then a portrait of the artist during his formative years emerged.

Rather than recount Ai's years in New York, the gallery unveiled his thoughts and attitudes at that period by choosing images from the vast collection. The pictures, wrapped around the gallery's walls, are presented in chronological order and when taken as a whole, give visitors a better understand-

ing of Ai's life and art.

"The photographs are a valuable piece of visual history for both his personal life and contemporary art," the founders said.

New York Photographs 1983-1993 – Ai Weiwei Solo Exhibition

Where: Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, 155 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 18, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm,

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 2663 ext 8008



6 Saturday, January 17

Exhibition

Accumulation
On rotation at the gallery are the

works of 13 artists – a commentary on contemporary culture as process rather than the production of individual objects.



Where: Pékin Fine Arts, 241 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 16, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3220

Yi Yan Solo Exhibition

Where: Fafa Gallery, 4 Yuyang Lu, Houshayu, Shunyi District

When: Until January 31, daily 10:30 am – 8 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8430 2587

Movie

Ip Man

A discussion follows the film screening.

Where: 43C, Beijing Keeven Aviation Instrument Co., 43 Beisanhuan Xi Lu,

Haidian District

When: 7-10 pm

Admission: 10 yuan

Tel: 8211 5288

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Nightlife

Scoff + Linga

Where: D22, 242 Chengfu Lu, Wudaokou, Haidian District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6265 3177

7 Sunday, January 18

Exhibition 2025 Project – Wu Xiaojun Solo Exhibition



Where: Magician Space, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 15, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9635, 8709 3557

Silent Music Touching Soul

Abstract art, an artistic revolution in the West, entered China in the 1980s. The exhibition presents the works of four Chinese abstract artists: Bo Yun, Mao Lizhi, Cheng Xiangjun and Zhang Jianbo. Their pieces combine traditional philosophy with Western modernity.

Where: Dandeli Gallery, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 10, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Tel: 6770 8966

Movie

Same Old Song

It is a small world for the characters in this 1997 French musical drama, who just cannot seem to avoid each other in the tale of fate, love and friendship.

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Stage in February

Concert

Choral Concert for the Chinese Lantern Festival

Who: Spring Choir of Beijing
Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

The Romantic Melody

Who: China Film Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: February 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-1,711 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Love in Spring

Who: Choir of the China National Symphony Orchestra

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

Music Festival Opening Concert of the China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009

Who: Conducted by Zhang Guoyong

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: February 22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-680 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Dance

Gala Show

Who: The Little Birch Tree Song and Dance Troupe of Russia

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: January 29-February 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Opera

Grand New Epic Peking Opera: Red Cliff

Who: Directed by Shi Hongtu

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: February 5-10, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-600 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Beauty Xi Shi

Who: Wuxi Song and Dance Ensemble and Jiangsu Province's Ethnic Dance Ensemble

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: February 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

A Sigh of Love

Who: Shanghai Ballet Company

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: February 18-20, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

White-haired Girl

Who: Shanghai Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: February 21-22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Li Jing)

Hold the rice, Atkins comes to China

Aktins diet

Joanna Yu, 35, a media producer, always stuns her friends with her slim figure. Every girls' night out, she is asked the same questions again and again: how does she stay so thin?

She said a change in diet is very important. Her first recommendation is the Aktins diet, one few Chinese people are willing to try because it clashes with the very core of what is considered healthy. The Aktins diet says the way to weight loss begins with bacon and eggs and continues with snacks of cheese, coffee topped with cream and steaks fried in butter.

It turns other diets upside down. The Aktins diet balances out its high-fat foods by eliminating all carbohydrates: no more bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, chocolate, crisps, biscuits or cake. Even fruit and vegetables are forbidden in the beginning.

The theory

The Atkins diet is quite popular overseas. It was designed by Robert Atkins who theorized that by cutting out carbohydrates, his body was forced to burn its fat stored to provide itself with energy. Since one burns more calories than carbohydrates when his or her body burns fat, he or she will lose weight quicker. The elimination of carbohydrates also keeps blood sugar levels stable throughout the day and prevents overeating.

Four phases of Aktins

There are four phases to the Aktins diet. The first phase, induction, must be followed for at least two weeks. The first two weeks are the most important, Yu said. During this phase, one must limit carbohydrate intake to 20 grams a day. This means no cookies, cakes, chocolates, chips, fizzy drinks, crisps and pastries, as well as no bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, milk, fruit and most vegetables on the menu. But one can eat unlimited amounts of red meat, chicken, fish, cheese, eggs, mayo, cream and butter.

During the other three phases, one can increase his or her carbohydrate intake slowly. Atkins said that if one strictly follows the induction, he or she can expect to lose 3-5 kilograms in the first two weeks.

Yu said many Chinese people can hardly stop eating rice or bread for the first two or three days. After several days, it gets easier. She said her first two weeks on the diet passed quickly.

She said that she did not follow the Aktins diet strictly. She snacked on dark

By Annie Wei

Losing weight is the top priority before Chinese New Year's when some escape Beijing for a bikini holiday. *Beijing Today* interviews some local women who successfully shed the pounds.

chocolate and ate fewer fruits and vegetables. "If you feel really hungry, a small piece of whole wheat bread is fine," Yu said.

Side-effects

Yu said the Aktins diet worked well for her. But other dieters desperate for weight loss may fear side-effects or damaging the body with imbalanced food.

When one starts Aktins, the fat-burning process results in bad breath, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, insomnia and nausea. Constipation may also occur as a consequence of avoiding typically high-fiber foods such as fruit, vegetables, beans, rice, noodles or bread. Also, many medical doctors have said the diet may cause long-term side effects.

Building confidence

Yu said her Aktin's diet plan did not last longer than two weeks. "For many people, they will lose their faith in a diet if they can't see results within a month. But losing obvious weight within one month by exercise is impractical for people who have tight work hours and no time for regular exercise," Yu said.

According to a street survey done by Beijing TV last year, 43 percent of interviewees said they hoped to lose weight through acupuncture and massage, 36 percent turned to medicine, 11 percent chose to diet and only 10 percent were willing to go to the gym and exercise.

Obviously, people only want to lose weight without effort.

Zhao Zhixin, a former teacher from Beijing Sports University and now a host of a Beijing TV health program, said acupuncture could help boost the body's metabolism and inhibit the appetite. Generally speaking, if one sticks to a diet and goes for acupuncture, his or her body can slim down fast. But Zhao said that once a person stops the acupuncture and returns to his or her normal eating habits, the weight will return: quickly.

Yu said that before she tried Aktins diet, she went for acupuncture. "During acupuncture, my doctor told me to quit eating beans. In fact, the diet for acupuncture has a lot in common with Aktins," Yu said.

The good thing about Aktins is it produces quick results, which boosts confidence in losing weight or maintaining one's figure. Yu said she only stayed on the Aktins diet for two weeks, and after that she never had to try it again. Now she regularly eats fewer carbs.

"Once you are confident about your figure, you feel happier with looking after it by exercising and eating healthy food," Yu said.

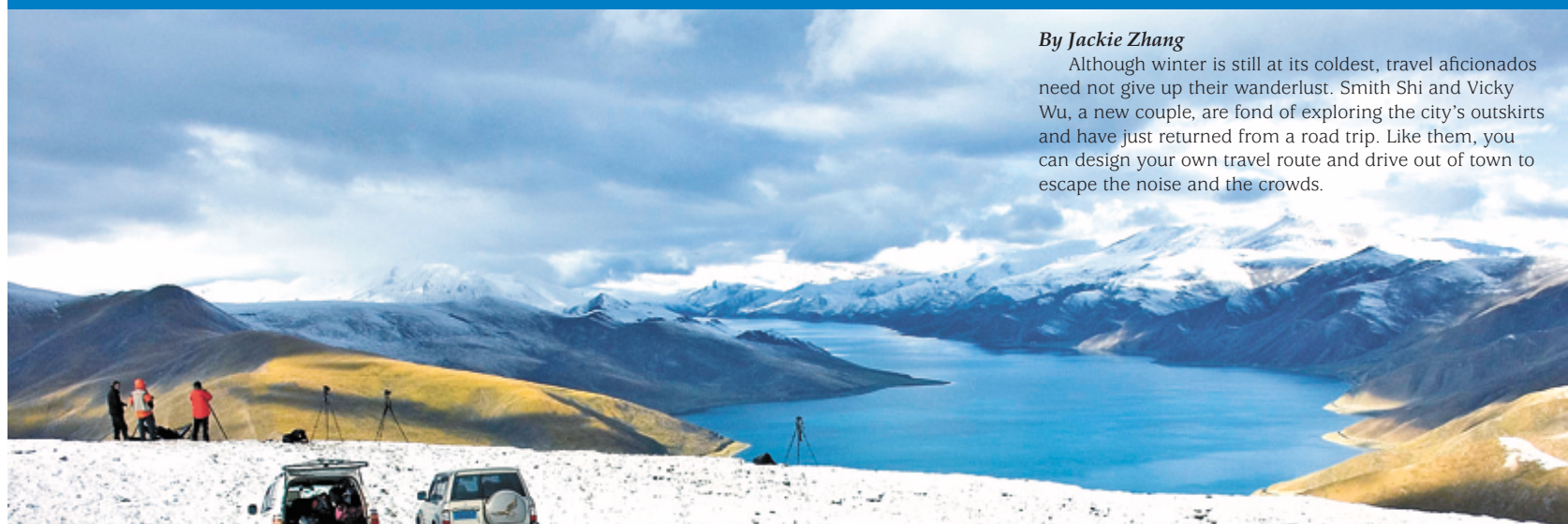


CFP Photo

Create your own winter adventure

By Jackie Zhang

Although winter is still at its coldest, travel aficionados need not give up their wanderlust. Smith Shi and Vicky Wu, a new couple, are fond of exploring the city's outskirts and have just returned from a road trip. Like them, you can design your own travel route and drive out of town to escape the noise and the crowds.



1

Route for romance

"There is no rule saying you can't go to the seaside in wintertime. It is true that I can't swim in the ocean in winter, but the feeling of standing on the beach can be really romantic. When the cold wind touches my skin and I hear the splashing of the waves, the sea in winter can make me feel lonely. But if your loved one is beside you, the atmosphere becomes romantic." – Vicky Wu

Beidaihe Resort – Nandaihe Resort – Changli Gold Beach – Laolongtou Great Wall – Zushan Mountain

The most popular northern beach resorts are Beidaihe, Nandaihe and Changli Gold Beach. Every summer, crowds of people rush to these areas, creating noise and disorder that dampen the excursion. But if visitors go during winter, when most people prefer the warmth and comfort of home, a very different scene awaits them.

Beidaihe, Nandaihe and the Changli Gold Beach are all on the Bohai Rim, considered one of the best beach resorts in northern China. It has a warm and semi humid climate, and in winter, the average temperature is about 2 degrees lower than Beijing.

There are hostels in the area. Visitors who spend the night can go to the beach early in the morning to see the sunrise. They can sit on the shore, bask in the silence but for the sound of waves, then watch the sun slowly appear on the horizon and warm the earth. Wu said this was her

favorite scene.

"Fireworks are necessary to creating a romantic atmosphere," Wu said. "You can take fireworks with you or buy some at local markets. Every girl likely dreams of watching beautiful fireworks by the sea at night with her lover. So make your dreams come true. It is not difficult and not expensive at all."

Another upside to visiting the beach in winter is that seafood is cheaper. If they like, guests can ask local fishermen to take them fishing. But beware that it will be colder at sea than standing on the beach.

Near Bohai is Laolongtou, where the eastern portion of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall begins. Built in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it extends into the sea and looks like the head of a dragon, thus the name Laolongtou or Head of an Old Dragon. Photographers will enjoy the view.



Laolongtou

2

Route to royalty

"In ancient times, Chengde Mountain Resort was where the emperor and the royal family spent their summers. Now, ordinary people can go whenever they like. Most visitors come in the summer because it is cooler there than in Beijing. I don't want to be restricted by rules. It is also interesting to come in winter. There is much to see in the area." – Smith Shi

CFP Photos

Jinshanling Great Wall – Chengde Mountain Resort – Eight temples around the mountain resort

The city of Chengde is at the border of Huabei Plain, or the North China Plain, and the Inner Mongolia Plateau. Although it is cold there in winter, the mountains around the city block the frigid air from the Inner Mongolia Plateau. In the summer, the scenery at the Chengde Mountain Resort is as nice as it is in Jiangnan, the area on the south bank of the Yangtze River. Few people know that the Chengde resort is also beautiful in winter, especially after it snows. Visitors can go ice skating on its frozen lakes.

Puning Temple is the only one of eight temples around the resort with resident lamas. It also houses one of China's biggest carved wooden Buddha painted with gold lacquer. The image is over 27 meters tall, weighs 110 tons and is included in the Guinness Book of World Records. "I don't believe in Buddhism, but it is still nice to ask for blessings in the temple from the Buddha," Shi said. "There is a saying in China that it doesn't matter that a temple is small, it is still effective if there is a Buddha in it."

Continued on page 21...

Photo provided by Smith Shi

Route:

The distance between Beijing and Beidaihe is 260 kilometers. Drive from the East Fourth Ring Road, then enter Jingshen Expressway (Beijing to Shenyang). Take the Beidaihe Exit. Those going to Nandaihe should take the Qinhuangdao Exit. Laolongtou and Zu Mountain are quite close to Beidaihe and Nandaihe, all of which are in Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province.



...continued from page 20

The Little Potala is also a must-see. It is a replica of Tibet's Potala Palace and to some extent, can satisfy the curiosity of those who have not seen the real thing. Its gold-colored roofs and red walls are typical of Tibetan architecture. Little Potala, whose real name is Putuo Zongcheng Temple, covers the largest area among the eight temples around the resort.

Chengde Mountain Resort used to be called Rehe, or hot river, Palace, because there is a hot river running through a nearby village. The river starts in the northeastern part of the resort and is dozens of meters long. In wintertime, when all the lakes around it are frozen, the river, which comes from an underground spring, still flows.

Many spotted deer are raised in the resort. Visitors will likely come face-to-face with a few of them. "They are not afraid of strangers. They may stare at you, but do not move. When you get too close to them, they'll warn you that you're offending them by shaking their heads," Shi said.

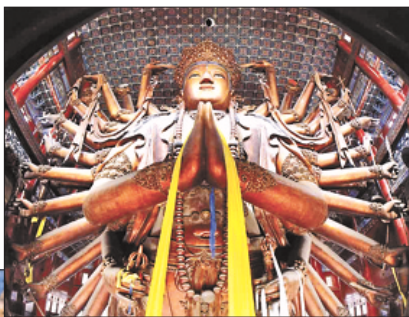
Route:

Drive from Dongzhimen to Miyun, then take the Jingcheng Expressway (Beijing to Chengde). On the way, travelers will pass the Jinshanling Great Wall and an old town, Gubeikou, which are also good places to visit.

The carved wooden Buddha in Puning Temple



Frescoes in Puning Temple CFP Photos



The Little Potala's architecture is a copy of the Potala Palace in Tibet.

3 Route for history and culture

"I was born in Beijing and have been living here for over 20 years. But I know little about the history and cultural heritage of the surrounding areas. I designed the route below for my next trip, maybe during the Spring Festival, to learn more about history and culture." – Vicky Wu

Former Mansion of the Provincial Governor – Mancheng Tomb – Zhaozhou Bridge – Xiangshantang Grottoes

The Former Mansion of the Provincial Governor is located at the center of Baoding City, Hebei Province. It is the only completely preserved Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) provincial government building. The architecture fully embodies the characteristics of buildings during the Yongzheng (1678-1735) and Qianlong (1735-1799) periods.

Mancheng Tomb, which is in Ling Mountain northwest of Baoding, is a key protected cultural relic. It is the tomb of Liu Sheng, the Zhongshan King of the West Han Dynasty (202-8 BC) and his wife. The tomb is the most preserved and largest cave palace, with its six rooms and wooden and stone plate structures. Liu, who became king in 154 BC and died in 113 BC, and his wife were buried wearing gold silk and jade.

Zhaozhou Bridge was built 1,400 years ago and is the oldest stone arch bridge in the world. The bridge has survived at least 8 wars, 10 major floods and numerous earthquakes, the most recent of which was the

7.2-magnitude Xingtai Earthquake in 1966. Yet, the support structure remains intact and the bridge is still in use. Only the ornamental railings are replaced every few hundred years.

The Xiangshantang Grottoes are located in Gu Mountain, Handan City, Hebei Province. Because the grottoes are halfway up the mountain, the voices and laughter of visitors echo. As a result, it was named Xiangshantang, which means "a place where echoes can be made." At present, there are 16 grottoes, over 450 cliff statues and many carved scriptures on its northern part. On the southern part are constructions that include halls, pavilions and towers. There are seven grottoes here, the biggest of which is the Huayan Grotto.

Route:

Drive along the Fourth Ring Road and get on the Jingshi Expressway (Beijing to Shijiazhuang) at Liuliqiao Exit. Alternatively, visitors can drive from Beijing to the south along Jingzhu Expressway (Beijing to Zhuhai) and then take the Baoding Exit. The journey takes around two hours. Handan City can be reached via the Jingzhu Expressway.



Great customer disservice!

And what you should be doing about it

By Morry Morgan

The flight of a China airline from Sydney to Shanghai was delayed again. This time by only three hours. A "newly fitted part," the Australian engineer had told me, had "failed the test after being installed" on the aging 737. A new part had to be found.

This was the second delay in less than a week I had endured on a flight with that airline. Six days earlier my flight from China to Australia required a seven-hour circumnavigation of the Pudong Airport, the point of departure, to burn off fuel before making an emergency landing. The cabin, I later found out, was unable to pressurize.

Of course all airlines, including the historically safe Qantas, which was having a bad spell the week I was in Australia first from an exploding oxygen cylinder and then with an engine fault, have occasional "issues" with their high-tech fleets. The only difference is that poor service has been dogging China Eastern, the country's third largest airline, for as long as I remember.

And to emphasize the degree of poor service, my company has an unofficial competition; "The longest flight delay." To date, the record is seven and a half hours and is held by, you guessed it, China Eastern. This record is even more notable in that the entire time was spent within the aircraft,



CFP Photo

not the terminal. The staff member sat squashed in his economy seat on the tarmac of Shanghai's Hong Qiao Airport. Thankfully, he later told me, he had quit smoking some weeks before.

My circumnavigation of Pudong Airport is a close second, followed by a flight, earlier in the year, which saw me waiting again in a non-moving aircraft beside the Beijing Capital Airport terminal for five and a half hours. Needless to say, the airline wins hands down as the most underperforming airline in China.

And, what is further worrying is the lack of information given to passengers when a delay occurs. For example, in my previous mentioned flight from China to Australia, no official information was given to passengers as to the reason for the delay. We were

simply herded off the broken aircraft and onto the next. The cause for the emergency landing had to be later coaxed from a flight stewardess by a fellow passenger, who then disseminated the information to his fellow passengers. "No news is good news" seems to be the prevailing attitude.

This, of course, is a fallacy, as proven in an incident at the Shenzhen airport in May, last year. The flight, again with China Eastern, was in its second hour of delay when the "tipping point" of discontent occurred. Some 30 frustrated passengers surrounded the boarding gate desk, demanding an answer for the delay. While the answer of "poor weather" was given, and most likely true, the nervous staff were not sharing the possible departure time. It was clear that these 30 customers

had more than their fair share of delays, and within minutes a megaphone miraculously appeared within the mob and chanting began. When the delayed plane finally landed, docked and unloaded its previous passengers some three hours late, four of the protestors refused to board. Ironically, this delayed the plane further, as their baggage was located and removed from the Shanghai-bound aircraft. It is clear that poor service is no longer tolerated by Chinese air travellers.

So what is the underlying cause of such poor service?

Firstly, we have to assume that to stay commercially viable the airline and its competitors will increase their investment in maintenance of its fleet of aircraft. China's controlled market economy could easily see one air-

line absorbed or eliminated by more reliable competitors. And while the last commercial airline to crash in China was China Northern Airlines in 2002, a repeat today would be commercial suicide. Knock-on-wood we never see a repeat.

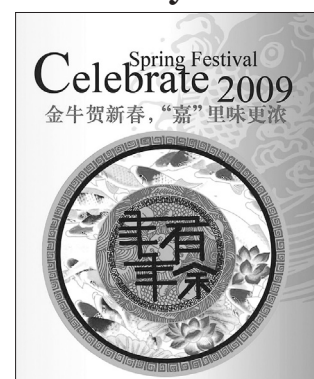
Secondly, weather, particularly over such an enormous land mass, is bound to vary and cause headaches for weather forecasters and pilots alike. This is unlikely to change, so what control does an airline have?

The clear answer is to improve communication between staff and customers.



Morry Morgan trains "Needs based selling" across China, which includes customer relationship management as a key component to repeat business.

Dining Niangao and celebratory dinners



Celebrate Spring Festival 2009 with Chef Cheng's elaborately prepared rice cakes, hampers and truffles. Their stylish packaging holds delicious festive goodies made with fresh ingredients that not only tempt with their homemade taste but deliver with a surprise for the taste buds. Choose a pair of fish to convey wishes of happiness, or pick one of the exquisitely designed hampers filled with your choice of delicious goodies to give to your favorite people.

Where: Horizon Chinese Restaurant, Kerry Center Hotel, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8529 9466

Chinese New Year

To celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Ox, Executive Chef So at the Kempinski Hotel has selected the best of his seasonal

delicacies.

Where: Dragon Palace, Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 11:30 am - 2 pm, 5:30-10 pm

Cost: from 148 yuan per person (subject to 15 percent surcharge)

Tel: 6465 3388 ext 4108

Chinese New Year hamper and Niangao

Gourmet Chinese New Year celebration hampers of all sizes lovingly packaged for your friends and family this festive season. Surprise and delight your family and friends with Chinese New Year Hampers and Niangao.

Where: The Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Jinrong Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 1-26

Cost: 398 yuan net (Niangao Hamper), 1,180 yuan net (Golden Ox Hamper)

Tel: 6629 7777

Niangao hamper



Celebrate the most splendid and eagerly-anticipated of holidays, the upcoming Spring Festival, surrounded by the blessings

of family, friends and delectable Chinese New Year cakes and beautifully-packaged hampers.

Choose from dragon fish cakes, sesame balls, assorted dumplings stuffed with lotus, red bean or sesame paste, or a dazzling selection of Chinese New Year gift sets and Spring Festival hampers.

Where: China World Hotel Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: January 1 - February 9

Tel: 6505 5838

Charity 4th Annual Cuisine for A Cause 2008: IHG Beijing Cluster Hotels and Project Hope in Support of Children's Continuous Education

Following successful charity drives through the years, 15 IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) cluster hotels have jointly provided a caring hand for children's education by organizing the 4th annual Cuisine for A Cause culinary competition, with over 150 chefs and bartenders taking part in the showcasing event this year.

Through this cooking competition, IHG Beijing has raised 265,000 yuan. Cooperating with China Youth Development Foundation and Project Hope, the fund will be used to build an IHG Hope School in the rural area, providing

students in need with opportunity for an education. IHG has the goal of building 10 Hope Schools in China in 2008. With the assistance of China Youth Development Foundation and through Project Hope, the funds will be utilized to build the third school in China's rural area, providing support to students' and teacher's education program.

Ski Resort Beijing Yunfoshan Ski Resort

Beijing Yunfoshan Ski Resort is surrounded by mountains. It has one expert ski run, three intermediate runs, four primary runs, one motorcycle run and one cross-country trail for snowmobiles. The resort has 10 high-tech snowmakers, two snow-groomers, two cableways, nine drag lifts and four ropeways. The advanced sightseeing cable cars can move 3,500 passengers per hour and the rental hall has equipment for 3,000 skiers. Sleighs and dog sleds are also available this winter.

Where: Xiwenzhuang Zhen, Miyun Country

Open: 8:30 am - 5 pm

Cost: 140 yuan two hours (weekend & holiday)

Tel: 8903 2601 or 2602

Web: yunfoshan.com

Beijing Snow World Ski Resort

Located in the Thirteen Tombs Scenic Area, Beijing Snow World

Ski Resort is one of the nearest ski resorts to downtown Beijing. It has six ski runs including one single board track and can accommodate 1,800 skiers. Its primary and intermediate runs are designed to enable skiers to progress while having fun. The advanced runs allow experts to practice their skills. The large-scale snow ground is a paradise for kids who want to have a snowball fight or make a snowman.

Where: Xiaogongmen Cun, Shisanling Zhen, Changping District

Open: 8:30 am - 5 pm

Cost: 140 yuan two hours (weekend)

Tel: 8976 1886 or 1889

Web: bjxueshijie.com

Beijing Yunju Ski Resort

Beijing Yunju Ski Resort is 60 kilometers out of the city and has eight ski runs of different levels. The Chuyun and Feixian meet the domestic standards for senior ski runs with a total length of 1,600 meters and peak gradient of 25 degrees. The resort is equipped with two four-seated ropeways, six drag lifts and 2,500 sets of new equipment.

Where: Caijiakou Cun, Zhangfang Zhen, Fangshan District

Open: 8:30 am - 5 pm

Cost: 140 yuan two hours (weekend), 160 yuan two hours (holiday)

Tel: 6138 9800 or 6133 8589

Web: yjski.com

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.

Let us talk about the odds



By Gan Tian

Every time I go to a karaoke bar with friends, I always sing Phil Collins's "Against All Odds." Mariah Carey and Westlife also have a version of it.

The song tells the story of two lovers who have parted, leaving the narrator heartbroken. A portion of the lyrics go this way: "How can I just let you walk away, just let you leave without a trace ... Just take a look at me now, well there's just an empty space, and you coming back to me is against the odds and that's what I've got to face."

I always thought the title, Against All Odds, meant "very strange." In high school, I learned that "odd" meant "unusual" or "unexpected in a way that attracts one's interest or attention." Therefore, "you coming back to me is against the odds" meant "it is unusual and unexpected that you are coming back to me."

But I learned I was wrong when I sang it one evening in the company of my American friend Kevin.

"Look at those two sad lovers," I said, pointing at the music video.

"But they eventually got back together in the song," Kevin said.

"No way. The lyrics say it is strange if the girl does come back. It is 'against all odds,'" I said.

"Oh, you must have taken 'odds' for 'odd.' They are two totally different words," he said.

I was confused. "Isn't it just the plural form?"

"No, no, no," Kevin said. "'Odd' means unusual or something unexpected. For example, His paintings are a rather odd mixture of German and British influences. But 'odds' means the chances of something happening."

My face must have looked like a big question mark, so Kevin explained further. "The odds, or chances, of getting hit by a falling satellite are very small. The odds are it won't happen. On the other hand, what are the odds our friend Jim will show up tonight?"

But I still did not get what "against all odds" meant in Phil Collins's song. Did it mean there was no chance the girl was coming back? How come Kevin said they got back together?

As soon as I got home, I looked up "odds" in the dictionary, and finally got it. Another definition for the word is "difficulties or conditions that make success unlikely." That meant the lovers reconciling was against overwhelming odds, but they did it anyway, said Kevin.

I reread the lyrics and was not sure I agreed with Kevin. Maybe I should write to Phil Collins to get the real story.

Blacklist

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a new column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch out for it each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. Now is a weak season for pollution cases.

"Now" can hardly be used as a subject. An expression using the word is, "It is now the time to do it." Secondly, to use the adjective "weak" to describe the incidence of pollution cases is incorrect and quite Chinglish. You may say a "slack business season," but never a "weak business season." It is better to say, "It is a season with fewer pollution cases."

2. A fantastic way to ruin the date.

The problem with this sentence lies in the usage of the word "date." A date is a person of the opposite sex with whom one has such an appointment. You cannot possibly ruin a person of the opposite sex with whom you have an appointment. It is the act of dating you are to ruin, right? So, the correct way to say it is, "A fantastic way to ruin the dating." It is much the same way as saying, "It is a fantastic way to have a mixing of two chemical elements."

Native speaker: Penny Turner

1. Now is a weak season for pollution cases.

Aside from Professor Zhu's suggested fix, the sentence can work just by replacing the word "weak" with "slow." Hence, the revised sentence would be, "Now is a slow season for pollution cases." Another way to tweak the line would be to change the placement of the word "now." It can be rewritten this way: "It is now a weak season for pollution cases."

2. A fantastic way to ruin the date.

If the speaker means to be sarcastic about a specific date that was ruined, I do not think there is anything wrong with the phrase. The complete sentence would be, "It was a fantastic way to ruin the date." But if the speaker is nastily suggesting ways to ruin dates in general, then a sample sentence would be, "A fantastic way to ruin a date would be to leave her with the dinner bill." If the person, however, wants to be matter-of-fact about ways to ruin a date, then "fantastic" should be replaced with an adjective such as "effective."

Aside from the definition of "date" that Professor Zhu gave, the word also means "a social engagement between people."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.

After first under on, do riding with civility

By Tiffany Tan

The first part of the sign sounds like an English grammar test question in which students are asked to choose from a list of words to complete a sentence: (After, first, under, on) ... Please encircle/underline the word that best fits the sentence. The English literal translation does not even follow the Chinese word order, so the writer must have gotten dizzy in the process of doing this.

This sign is one of the legacies of the Olympic Games, in which Beijing govern-

ment officials tried to do everything they could to make the city clean, orderly and hospitable to guests. Because subway passengers are notorious for slamming into each other when they get on and off as soon as carriage doors open, this sign was an imperative. It basically says, "give way to alighting passengers" or "allow people to alight before boarding."

The second part of the sign asks passengers to behave in a civilized manner inside the subway.





Twilight

(2008)



Movie of the week

A love story between a vampire and a human is hardly strange in the world of modern fiction. *Twilight*, firstly popularized as the bestselling *Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyer, is a different vampire story. The vampires in the movie are “vegetarians,” since they never prey on humans but instead live on animal blood. The love that occurs between Edward Cullen, the vampire, and Bella Swan, the “lucky” human girl, is compared to what happens when a lion falls in love with a lamb.

Synopsis

When Bella comes to live with her father in the rainy little town of Forks, Washington, she doesn't expect much of anything to change. Then she meets the mysterious and dazzlingly beautiful Edward Cullen, a boy unlike any she has ever met. Edward is a vampire, but he does not have fangs and his family is unique in that they choose not to drink human blood. They are swept up in a passionate, thrilling and unorthodox romance.

But what will Edward and Bella do when a clan of new vampires – James, Laurent and Victoria – come to town and threaten to disrupt their way of life?

Scene 1

The salad bar station, cafeteria

(Bella artfully designs an architectural salad. As she reaches for an apple, Edward is suddenly next to her.)

Edward (E): Edible art? *(Bella is startled. She fumbles and drops the apple. Edward catches it with his foot, hackysack style, then bounces it back into his hand. He presents it to Bella with small smile.)*

Bella (B): Thanks. You know, your mood swings are kind of giving me a whiplash.

E: I only said it'd be better for you if we weren't friends, not that I didn't want to be.

B: What does that mean?

E: It means if you're smart, you'd stay away from me.

B: OK. Well, let's say for argument's sake that I'm not smart. Will you tell me the truth?

E: No, probably not. I'd rather hear your theories.

B: I have considered ... radioactive spiders and Kryptonite (1).

E: That's all super-hero stuff, right? Um ... what if I'm not the hero? What if I'm ... the bad guy?

B: You're not. I can see what you're trying to put off (2). But I can see that it's just to keep people away from you. That's a mask. Why don't we just ... hang out (3)? Everybody is going to the beach. Come ... I mean, have fun.

E: Which beach?

B: La Push.

E: I don't know.
B: Is there something wrong with that beach?
E: ... It's just a little crowded.

Scene 2

On the school lawn

(Edward watches Bella disappear in the trees, then takes a step to follow.)

B: You're impossibly fast, and strong. Your skin is pale white and ice cold. Your eyes change color. And sometimes you speak like ... like you're from a different time. You never eat or drink anything. You don't go out in the sunlight ... How old are you?

E: Seventeen.

B: How long have you been seventeen?

E: ... a while.

B: ... I know what you are.

E: Say it ... out loud ... say it.

B: ... Vampire.

E: Are you afraid?

B: ... No.

E: ... I'm a killer.

B: I don't believe that.

E: Because you believe the lie ... the camouflage (4). I'm the world's most dangerous predator (5). Everything about me invites you in. My voice, my face, even my smell. As if I would need any of that. As if you could outrun (6) me! As if you could fight me off (7). I'm designed to kill.

B: I don't care.

E: I've killed people before.

B: It doesn't matter.

E: ... I wanted to kill you. I've never wanted a human's blood so much in my life.

B: I trust you.



E: *(stares at her)* Don't.
B: I'm here. I trust you.
E: My family, we're different from others of our kind. We only hunt animals. We've learned to control our thirst. As to you ... your scent ... is like a drug to me ... like my own personal brand of heroin.
B: Then, why did you hate me so much when we met?
E: I did. Only for making me want you so badly. I still don't know if I can control myself.
B: I know you can.
E: I can't read your mind. You have to tell me what you're thinking.
B: Now, I'm afraid.
E: Good.
B: I'm not afraid of you. I'm only afraid of losing you, like you're going to disappear.
E: You don't know how long I've waited for you. And so the lion fell in love with the lamb ...
B: What a stupid lamb?
E: What a sick, masochistic (8) lion.

Scene 3

Mimi's School of Dance

(Laughter comes from behind Bella. She spins, trying to locate James in the mirrors.)

James (J): That's my favorite part. You were a stubborn child, weren't you?

B: She's not even here ...

J: Sorry. But you really made it too easy. So, to make things more entertaining. We are gonna make a little film of our time together. I borrowed this from your house. I hope you don't mind.

(James turns on a video camera in his hand and points it at Bella)

J: Okay! And ... action! That will break Edward's little heart.

B: Edward has nothing to do with this!

J: He does. His rage will make for (9) more interesting sportings than this feeble attempt to protect you. And let's continue.

(Bella spins around and sprays pepper spray to James. Then she runs, as James reels back briefly. He flings her across the floor like a blowing ball. She smashes hard into a mirrored column. James captures it on film.)

J: Beautiful. Very visually dynamic. I chose my stage well. It's bad he didn't have the strength to turn you. Instead he kept you this fragile little human. It's cruel, really.

(James stomps on Bella's shin, hearing her tibia snap. Bella screams in agony.)

J: Tell him to avenge you! Tell him to avenge you! Tell him!

B: Edward don't!

J: Tell him!

(Suddenly, James is knocked out of the frame! He rises to find himself face to face with Edward. James charges Edward, forcing him up against a column.)

J: You're alone, 'cause you're faster than the others, but not stronger.

Edward: I'm strong enough to kill you.

Vocabulary

1. Kryptonite: a mineral from the Superman mythos, originating in the Superman radio show series. The material is usually shown as having been created from the remains of Superman's native planet of Krypton, and generally has detrimental effects on Superman and other Kryptonians. It is also used in modern speech as a synonym for Achilles' heel, the one

weakness of an otherwise invulnerable hero.

2. put off: to delay doing something until later because you do not want to do it now.

3. hang out: to spend a lot of time in a particular place or with particular people.

4. camouflage: behavior that is designed to hide something.

5. predator: an animal that kills

and eats other animals.

6. outrun: to run faster than; to escape from.

7. fight off: to use violence to keep someone or something away; to try hard to get rid of something.

8. masochistic: enjoys being hurt or punished.

9. make for: to be likely to have a particular result or make something possible. (By Jackie Zhang)